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LITERATURE AND ART.

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No. LVII.

JANUARY, 1896.

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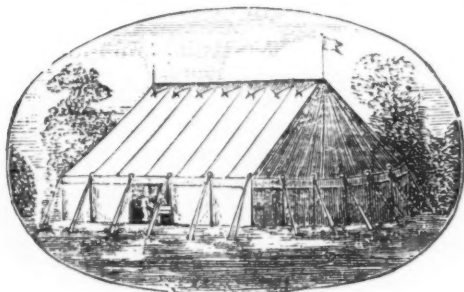
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WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH.

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LANCASHIRE NOVELISTS SERIES. — III.

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH.

BY EDMUND MERCER.

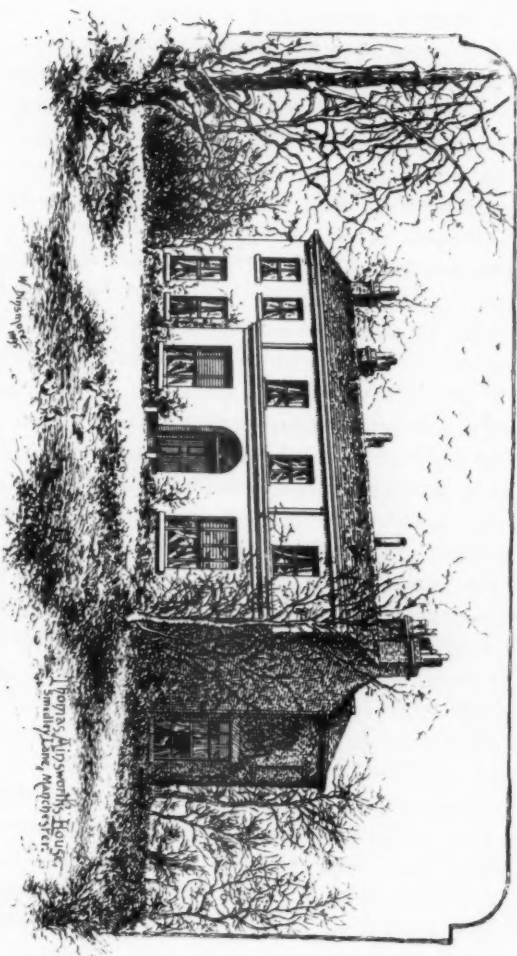
WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH (up to the present day the most famous of the many Lancashire novelists) was the son of Thomas Ainsworth, an attorney of Manchester, and junior partner in the firm of Halstead and Ainsworth. He was born on the 4th of February, 1805, at his father's house, 39, King Street, Manchester, one of the four houses which formerly stood between the (present) Free Reference Library and Pall Mall corner.* Thomas Ainsworth had a large practice, and was enabled to give his son the best education that, at all events, local institutions could furnish. Young Ainsworth's early training was superintended by his maternal uncle and godfather, the Rev. William Harrison, whose labour of love was interrupted when, at twelve years of age, his promising pupil entered the Manchester Grammar School, March 20, 1817. His father had on August 11, 1811, purchased the house, Beech Hill, Smedley Lane, Cheetham, which is still in

* The position of the entrance to No. 39 is now the doorway of No. 57, Liverpool and London Chambers.

existence in the midst of an almost treeless waste, despite the fact that William Harrison Ainsworth and his brother Thomas Gilbert Ainsworth, while living there, planted a large number of trees which, in the ordinary course of nature, should still surround the house. His life at the Grammar School he has depicted in a most vivid and picturesque manner in the early pages of "Mervyn Clitheroe," which, in subject, style, and treatment, read like chapters of De Quincey's Autobiography. His earliest works, while still a schoolboy, are said to have been fireworks, of which, of course, no trace is extant. This passion soon ended in smoke, yielding to a more lasting one for the Drama, which, in the course of its growth, promoted that which ceased only with his career on earth. It is recorded that, in 1820, when fifteen, he wrote a play, constructed a theatre in the cellarge of the King Street house, put together the machinery, fixed the curtain, painted the scenery, designed and partly made the dresses, stage-managed, prompted, and acted at least one character, for the exigencies of the theatre staff sometimes demanded—O Bully Bottom!—an almost simultaneous presentment of three by one performer. One of the plays was published in *Arless's Magazine* for the year 1820, to which he thenceforward became a regular contributor. In the following year, at sixteen, he wrote a tragedy—curiously enough, on the same subject as, but prior to, that of "The Foscari," by Byron—and sent it to Constable's *Edinburgh Magazine*, where it appeared about a month before Byron's drama; and this was the first of many contributions to that magazine. Having attained the first form in the Grammar School, in 1822, he left, and was articled to Mr. Alexander Kay, a leading attorney, and afterwards Mayor of Manchester. The law (which, in spite of many adjectives to the contrary, is anything but a withered and charmless

From a Drawing by William Dismore

THOMAS AINSWORTH'S HOUSE, SMEDLEY LANE.



Thomas Ainsworth's House,
Smedley Lane, Manchester.



pursuit—to the lawyer) had less fascination for him than literature; first, because he was not on speaking terms with it, and, secondly, because his antiquarian tastes—afterwards so useful, and so admirably, if somewhat too minutely, displayed in his greater works—were not sufficiently developed to search into the endless romance its history and growth would have revealed to his strong imagination. He therefore busied himself with stories and poems. For Taylor and Hessey's *London Magazine* he wrote a story, "The Falls of Ohiopyle," which appeared in July, 1822; and for *Arliss's Magazine*, two poems, "A Maid's Revenge" and a "A Summer Evening Tale," the latter being published in a volume in London, 1825. In 1822, also, Arliss published for him a collection of his poems, bearing the title, "The Works of Cheviot Tichburn," which he dedicated to Charles Lamb; a new and revised edition was published by John Leigh, in Manchester, three years later. At this time he also wrote largely for *The Iris*, a weekly literary journal of Manchester; and such was his reputation that an aspiring, and afterwards repentant printer, the said John Leigh, induced him to write a theatrical paper. Of this venture he writes to James Crossley—his bosom aider and abettor in these early literary pranks—dating from Hill View Lodge, Reigate, June 8th, 1876: "I have no numbers of *Arliss's Magazine*, nor have I a relic of a little weekly theatrical journal which I brought out about 1822. Do you recollect it? It was the speculation of a printer, named, I think, John Lee, and was published by B. Wheeler, in St. Ann's Passage, but naturally failed, as it was sure to do, since I never saw the performances which I pretended to criticise"—a characteristic remark, with which those who have committed a similar crime will sympathise. In 1823, a collection of some of Ainsworth's fugitive work, together with contribu-

tions from other hands, was issued in London, in a volume, with the title of "December Tales." He continued his work for the various magazines with which he was connected till 1824, in which year, while writing for the *European Magazine*, he became the proud proprietor of a little literary bantling, godfathered by Thomas Sowler, christened *The Baetian*, and literally a weakly one, since it was born March 20, 1824, and died April 24, 1824, aged six weeks.

His literary labours were shortly afterwards sadly interrupted. His father died on June 20, 1824, and, soon after, Ainsworth went to London to continue his legal studies with Mr. Jacob Phillips, of the Inner Temple. As before, his application to the law was of brief duration, succumbing to the inextinguishable flame for literature—a flame constantly fanned and fed by his contact with the literary circles of the metropolis. He soon became acquainted with Mr. John Ebers, a gentleman who combined the business of a publisher with the doubtful pleasure of an opera-house manager; and in 1826 Mr. Ebers published Ainsworth's first novel, "Sir John Chiverton," a romance of Hulme Hall, the home of the Prestwyche family in the reign of Elizabeth. Forty years later the entire authorship of this novel was claimed by Mr. John Partington Aston. This delay, in my view, casts considerable doubt on Mr. Aston's claim, or else it is an unusual example of modesty and reticence. Whatever may be the rights of the two claimants, it is not credible that Ainsworth should write a poetical dedication of another man's novel to the girl who was destined to be his wife. Yet the dedicatory verses were his, and the goddess to whom they were offered was Anne Frances (Fanny), Mr. Ebers' youngest daughter, whom Ainsworth married on the 11th October, 1826. On the other hand, I do not think Mr. Aston would

make an utterly unfounded claim, and am therefore inclined to give both claimants credit for a share—more or less—in the story. A copy of it was given to John Lockhart (to whom Ainsworth had been introduced by James Crossley), and Lockhart passed it on to his father-in-law, Sir Walter Scott, who, in his diary, dated from Lockhart's house, 28, Pall Mall, October 17, 1826, the day he arrived in London, remarked, "I read with interest, during my journey, 'Sir John Chiverton' and 'Brambletye House,' novels in what I may surely claim as the style—

Which I was born to introduce—
Refined it first and show'd its use.

They are both clever books—one in imitation of the days of chivalry, the other (by Horace Smith, one of the authors of 'Rejected Addresses') dated in the time of the Civil wars, and introducing historical characters." During this visit of the Great Magician to London, Ainsworth was introduced to him, and on his next visit wheedled out of him, for an Annual, a trifle of verse, now the world-famous song, "The Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee," for which Ainsworth paid Sir Walter twenty guineas, which he accepted, but bestowed on his little granddaughter, Lockhart's baby.

Upon Ainsworth's marriage, the necessity for deciding upon some career became evident, and following up a suggestion born of the experience of his father-in-law, Ebers, he began business as a publisher; his aims being, as he confessed, to promote the best interests of literature generally, and to advance his own reputation as an author. During the eighteen months or so over which this extended, he published a second edition of "Sir John Chiverton," in 1827, and subsequently issued the Hon. Mrs. Norton's first volume of poems, which was successful, and consequently

satisfactory. He also introduced to the world the literary labours of Ude, the Duke of York's pet cook; and published "The Christmas Box," the before-mentioned annual, in which "Bonnie Dundee" appeared, in 1828. Ainsworth's experience as a publisher, unlike that of his father-in-law, not being financially exhilarating, at the beginning of the year 1830 he ceased business, making up his mind to follow a literary career, the riddle being, curiously enough, how to begin it. In the summer of the year he travelled in Switzerland and Italy, but returned home no nearer a solution. It was not till the next year that he, once and for ever, propounded the correct answer, and, as is frequently the case with momentous events, he did not recognise it as such until a few years later. Visiting Chesterfield in 1831, and "wishing," he says, "to describe somewhat minutely the trim gardens, the picturesque domain, the rook-haunted groves, the gloomy chambers and gloomier galleries of an ancient hall with which I was acquainted, I resolved to attempt a story in the bygone style of Mrs. Radcliffe, substituting an old English squire, an old manorial residence, and an old English highwayman, for the Italian marchese, the castle, and the brigand of that great mistress of romance." The result was, three years later (1834) "Rookwood," a melodramatic story, savouring of the first English tragedies, uncompromisingly bloody, frankly supernatural, the atmosphere tenebrous, being nocturnal when it was not absolutely subterranean; and the machinery of a primitive theatrical kind, working on hinges, secret doors, moving statues, and sarcophagus lids. Ainsworth had not at the time learned much of the art of story-telling. His plot was confused merely because he did not begin the story at the beginning, and had, in consequence, to hark back frequently, giving the reader many preliminary afterthoughts. He exhibited his details

with an air of conscious knowledge, as though he had learned them; admitting, indeed, at one time that he got his thieves' patter out of a Slang Dictionary. From what I have heard of it in real life, it is too thorough-going and artistic to be quite representative of reality. His puppets acted and spoke in a melodramatic, bombastic manner, were devoted to aggravated song and recitation, and, whether expedient or not, even anticipated the resurrection to get rid of some elocutionary incubus. In spite of these little aberrations the novel was an immediate success. The *Edinburgh Review* said that "What Mr. Ainsworth has ventured to do, and successfully, is to revive the almost exploded interest afforded by the supernatural; and to preserve this, not in connection with days long gone by, but side by side with the sober realities of 1737, with the convivialities of Yorkshire squires and country attorneys, with the humours of Justices of the Peace, and the feats of Dick Turpin, the highwayman." The principal, of many with which he was credited, the famous ride to York, was also a feat of literary production. Ainsworth himself says that this "composition of one hundred novel pages in less than twenty-four hours was achieved at The Elms, a house I then occupied at Kilburn."

When the success of this novel and his own popularity were practically assured, he immediately began another, "Crichton," the subject being the career of the famous Scottish lad at the court of Henri Trois of France. This story seems apparently to have been inspired by Dumas, whose novel, "La Reine Margot," it immediately follows in point of actual historical time. It differs, however, from the style of the great French romancer in its somewhat slow and cumbrous progression; the brisk dialogue of the Gallic romance giving place to over-elaboration of detail and description, a fault due to Ainsworth's mastery of

matters antiquarian and an anxiety not to omit or falsify the veriest trifle, a fault less apparent in his later historical novels than in his first. In characterisation in this particular story Ainsworth is less brilliant than Dumas, though quite as true. The persons who appear in each story are identifiable, probably since Ainsworth, like Dumas, derived much of his information from "Les Tablettes" of Pierre L'Estoile, the French Pepys of 1540, a very gossip, who had a passion for jotting down in a jumble all kinds of notes, public and private, literary and obituary, in a lavish and careless manner. "Crichton," for the manuscript of which Ainsworth received £350 from Mr. Macrone, was published in the spring of 1837, and had a remarkably rapid sale.

Ainsworth's next novel was "Jack Sheppard," which was secured for *Bentley's Miscellany* by its then editor, Charles Dickens; the first instalment appearing in the number for January, 1839, the story running through the year. It was eagerly read, and when brought out in three volumes towards the close of the year, with illustrations by George Cruikshank, its sale at the time exceeded that of "Oliver Twist." So popular was it with all sorts and conditions of men that it was produced in dramatic form simultaneously at eight different theatres in London alone, and in some instances George Cruikshank's designs were used as scenes. This was the opportunity for those critics to whom Dick Turpin was a bugbear to object to the glorification of such a vulgar, selfish rascal as Jack Sheppard. True, they said, we had previously had "The Beggars' Opera" and "Jonathan Wild the Great," but for the criminals there depicted their authors had not enlisted such sympathy as, by his art, Ainsworth had done for Jack Sheppard. The well-merited execution of the latter had been apotheosised almost into a martyrdom, and it

was said that this story made housebreakers, as in Germany Schiller's first play had made robbers. Whatever the truth of the various antagonistic criticisms, and whatever the sarcasm, scorn, and vituperation flung at Ainsworth, they were yet, and more especially from the mouths of opponents, high encomiums on Ainsworth's power as an author. Realising this, he thenceforward used his gifts in a wiser direction, and never again transformed a close-cropped blackguard into a golden-haired seraph.

In March, 1840, on Dickens' retirement from the editorship of *Bentley's*, he was succeeded by Ainsworth, at a salary of £51 per month. Ainsworth, indefatigable, immediately set to work upon two novels, in succession, "The Tower of London" and "Guy Fawkes." These, his first attempts to adapt English history to fiction, ran together in *Bentley's* during 1840 and 1841. "The Tower of London" appeared in volume form in 1840, and dealt with the period between the death of Edward VI. and the execution of Lady Jane Grey. Ainsworth, struck with the idea of the Tower as a background, endeavoured to show it as a palace, fortress, and prison; and such was his desire for accuracy of detail that he once got up in the dead of night, rushed to the Tower and roused the warders, in order to satisfy his mind upon some trivial matter of doorways and passages. His method of dealing with history was to saturate himself with all the known details, and, as far as possible, the actual background of the particular events he had decided to use as the nucleus of his novel, and around and among these he, without alteration of the facts, or the fate of historical celebrities, wove subtle bye-plots and invented personages unknown to English history, that, more or less, had, in the story, some influence upon the main event, "Guy Fawkes," a tragedy of fanaticism, both hero and heroine dying violent deaths,

was published in 1841. At the end of 1840, the proprietors of the *Sunday Times*, projecting an entirely new feature in newspaper management, offered Ainsworth £1,000 for a novel, to begin with the first week and close with the end of the year 1841. This offer he accepted, and with the New Year appeared the opening chapters of "Old St. Paul's, a Tale of the Plague and the Fire"; a narrative of possets and powders, and of the breaking forth of boils and blains both on man and on beast. A gruesome story, and yet, says Laman Blanchard, "with what a gentle and refining humanity he has detained us amidst what was loathsome, to exhibit to us, as it were, the lily in the charnel-house; and carried us through the pestilence and the flame, to vindicate the severity of human trials, to inculcate salutary lessons of exertion and endurance, and track the course of faith and courage and happiness through all." Ainsworth, with the twin novels growing side by side in *Bentley's*, and the editorial requirements of that magazine, had so much work on his hands that he did for the *Sunday Times* of necessity what a later romancist, James F. Smith, did from choice for the early numbers of the *London Journal*; that is, he wrote each instalment of "Old St. Paul's" just as it was wanted for the press. Notwithstanding, he never neglected his duties to his friends or to himself. This I consider a feat far surpassing that of the writing of the ride to York; as, in addition, during this period, he found time to sit, or rather stand, to H. W. Pickersgill, R.A., for the portrait exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1841; where he is depicted, says Blanchard, "not as some pale, worn, pining scholar—some fagging, half-exhausted periodical romancer—but as an English gentleman of goodly stature, and well-set limbs, with a fine head on his shoulders and a heart to match;" which latter, however, is not shown in the

picture. This portrait he afterwards presented to the Chetham Library, the feoffees of which have lent it to the Manchester Corporation, who have placed it in their Free Reference Library, where it occupies a prominent position at the staircase head. A reproduction of this picture—the first, I believe—by the kindness of the authorities in power, I have been able to obtain to accompany this paper.

Ainsworth's editorship of *Bentley's* came to an end with the year 1841, and in February of the following year he issued, with more prospect of success than gladdened his launching of *The Boetian*, a magazine bearing his own name, *Ainsworth's Magazine*, for which his pen was responsible for the first serial, "The Miser's Daughter," which he, at the time, regarded as his favourite among his own novels, and accordingly dedicated to his three daughters, Fanny, Emily, and Blanche. Of this magazine an interesting contemporary note occurs in Blanchard's article on Ainsworth in the *Mirror* for 1842. "Its success," he remarks, "measured by the sale of the first volume, now completed" [June, 1842] "surpasses, it is said, by many degrees that of any similar periodical that ever made its appearance. Its editor had surrounded himself by many able writers, but his reliance, perhaps, was upon a new tale from his own pen, 'The Miser's Daughter.' Though scarcely half finished, public opinion seems to have set its seal upon this fine-toned and charmingly coloured story as 'the favourite and the flower.' Of this work Cruikshank is the illustrator; but Mr. Ainsworth, it seems, purposes to keep the imagination of a second artist employed, for in July he opens, in his magazine, a new tale, entitled, 'Windsor Castle,' for which the celebrated Tony Johannot is to furnish steel engravings, and Alfred Delamotte woodcuts."

A month after the first issue, on March 15, it was Ainsworth's affliction to lose his surviving parent, "the revered mother who had taken pride in his rising fame, and had found joy in his constant affection." To her he had dedicated four years before (October 18, 1837), a new edition of "Rookwood," the novel that first brought him fame; and of her he there most beautifully says: "Exposed to trials of no ordinary difficulty, and visited by domestic afflictions of no common severity, you, my dear mother, have borne up against the ills of life with a fortitude and resignation which those who know you best can appreciate, but which none can so well understand or so thoroughly appreciate as myself. Suffering is the lot of all; submission under the dispensation is permitted to few; and it is my fervent hope that my own children may emulate your virtues, if they are happily spared your sorrows."

The story of "Windsor Castle," extending from the period of Anne Boleyn's entry into the life of Henry VIII. to her exit (and containing, as an interlude, a clever, though in its place, an inartistic interpolation of the history of the Castle that has nothing whatever to do with the story, and would be infinitely better as an appendix), was completed and published in 1843. The same year witnessed the appearance in his magazine of "St. James's, or the Court of Queen Anne," published in volume form in 1844. This story of what is known as the Conspiracy of the Junta (not to be confounded with that of the previous reign) is remarkable for the astute manner in which the conspiracy is unfolded, as well as for a most generous defence of the character of the Duke of Marlborough.

After the publication of this novel, Ainsworth took a four years' holiday from fiction, though not from literary work, until he was tempted from his comparative repose by another offer of £1,000 from the *Sunday Times* for a

second story, This, "The Lancashire Witches, a Romance of Pendle Forest," was the serial story of that paper during 1848, and on its subsequent publication, bore a dedication to James Crossley, editor of "The Discoverie of Witches in the County of Lancaster." Again followed an interval of retirement from the writing of romance, during which Ainsworth ceased the issue of his magazine in 1853, having acquired the *New Monthly Magazine*, which he conducted for many years. This seemed to give an additional impetus to Ainsworth's literary work, which lasted till his death. From 1854 to 1882 scarcely a year passed without a novel from his hand; and when this happened he published two in one year in recompense. The "Star Chamber" was given to the world in 1854, followed in the same year by the "Flitch of Bacon, or the Custom of Dunmow," which was planned many years before it was written. Ainsworth most appropriately dedicated this to Chevalier (since Baron) and Madame Bernhard Tauchnitz, well-known patterns of conjugal attachment. One of the characters in this story, Sir Gilbert Montfichet, who was a prodigal for a very short time, suggested that of Gage de Monthemer, the hero of his next novel, "The Spendthrift." This first saw the light in *Bentley's Miscellany*, in 1856. The following year Ainsworth's most characteristic novel, the "Life and Adventures of Mervyn Clitheroe," was written. Told by the hero himself, the story is vivacious and interesting to the end, and contains incidentally a charming and picturesque description of the life and scenery of Manchester and the surrounding localities as they appeared when George the Fourth was King—all the more valuable, coming, as it did, from the memory and pen of a ready writer who was born and bred in the country he describes. This tale was to Ainsworth what "David Copperfield" was to Dickens; the author of each story drew

upon his autobiography for a large part of the character, scenery, and incident. In John Brideoake, the bosom friend of Mervyn, Ainsworth drew with most loving touch the character and misfortunes of his brother Gilbert. The parallel, so far as I am aware, has not been noticed before, and I therefore describe it. John Brideoake, a clever but poor lad, rising rapidly in the school, succumbs to brain fever on the verge of obtaining a scholarship. He loses this, but manages to get to Oxford, with merely a sizarship. Here, again, the delicate state of his health precludes the hard study so necessary for his future success. and though he takes his degree it is nothing more. This was the tragedy of Gilbert's life, and part of that of his mother, to which Ainsworth so delicately alluded in the dedication to "Rookwood," already quoted. A fracture of the skull in early youth, brain fever, renewal of the attack under study, and consequent inability to exert his brain without serious results. "Poor Gilbert," says Ainsworth, writing to James Crossley, on May 22, 1876, and "poor Gilbert" again to the same gentleman on June 8, 1876. And in this pathetic and affectionate strain does Mervyn always allude to John Brideoake.

In 1859, Ainsworth varied his work by writing a long poem, "The Combat of Thirty, from an old Breton Lay of the Fourteenth Century"; but resumed his usual routine the next year when he wrote "Ovingdean Grange, a Tale of the South Downs." This is a curious and unique instance of the sequel to a novel appearing before its predecessor in actual time. "Boscobel, or The Royal Oak," written twelve years afterwards, relates what has been styled "the most romantic piece of English history we possess," the escape of Charles the Second after the last battle of Worcester in 1651, to his flight to Salisbury Plain; whilst "Ovingdean Grange" continues his flight

from the Plain to his departure for France. In 1861, Ainsworth wrote "The Constable of the Tower" for *Bentley's*, which was followed in 1862 by "The Lord Mayor of London, or City Life in the Last Century," and in 1863, "Cardinal Pole, or The Days of Philip and Mary." In 1864, *Bentley's* issued "John Law, the Projector." The year 1865 was a busy one with Ainsworth, who wrote two novels, "The Spanish Match, or Charles Stuart in Madrid," and "Myddleton Pomfret." "The Constable de Bourbon" appeared in 1866; "Old Court" in 1867; "The South Sea Bubble," in 1868; "Hilary St. Ives," in 1869; "Talbot Harland," in 1870; "Tower Hill," in 1871; "Boscobel," in 1872; and "The Good Old Times," afterwards called "The Manchester Rebels, or the Fatal '45," in 1873. In giving his reason for this abrupt change of title, Ainsworth very generously said: "The first edition of this work bore the title, 'The Good Old Times,' but it having recently been mentioned to me by the publishers that a popular authoress had in preparation a work similarly designated, I willingly relinquish the title to her, contenting myself with the present designation, which indeed is more appropriate than the other to a tale dealing so largely with the formation and fate of the unfortunate Manchester regiment." This story describes with more circumstance the Young Pretender's stay in Manchester, and is, in some sense, a pendant to Sir Walter Scott's "Waverley," in which the Prince's adventures in that town are merely alluded to in a few lines. "Jemmy Dawson," the subject of Shenstone's well-known ballad is, of course, one of the heroes of the narrative. From his publication of "Boscobel," in 1872, the adventures of the later Stuarts had a fascination for Ainsworth, for he has more to record of them than of any other Royal family. After that novel he wrote "The Manchester Rebels"; then, in 1875, after

an interpolation of two novels in 1874, "Merry England, or Nobles and Serfs," and "The Goldsmith's Wife," he reverted to the Old Pretender in "Preston Fight, or the Insurrection of 1715," the hero of this being the ill-fated Earl of Derwentwater, and the central incident that of the old Lancashire ballad:—

My Lord Derwentwater did swear,
If that proud Preston he came near ;
Ere the right should starve and the wrong should stand,
He would drive them into some foreign land.

In 1876 he published "Chetwynd Calverley," which was merely a temporary relief from Stuart history. Of this story, in the letter to James Crossley, May 22, 1876, already quoted, he remarks, "In the course of a few days I shall send you a book which I have just finished, 'Chetwynd Calverley.' In it I have introduced a curious poisoning case that bears a remarkable resemblance to the Balham mystery.* I think the story will interest you. When you have read the book, be good enough to hand it over to the Chetham Library." In a letter a month later, June 8, 1876, to the same fortunate recipient, he alludes to his next novel thus: "I have now resumed the 'Leaguer of Lathom,' which I had suspended for a time. It will be published about October." The full title is "The Leaguer of Lathom, a Tale of the Civil War in Lancashire." This is, of course, another Stuart story, and, historically, is the immediate prologue to Scott's "Peveril of the Peak." It extends from the year 1642 to the execution of Lord Derby in Bolton in 1651, and includes the sieges of Manchester, Lathom House, near Wigan, Stockport, Preston, Warrington, Liverpool, and the blowing up of Hoghton Tower, a

* In progress of investigation at the time.

suggestively thrilling list. The *Saturday Review*, of November 11, 1876, however, said that this novel "contained a peculiarly placid account of an episode in the Great Rebellion. To judge from what we learn from Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, the Civil War often degenerated into a sort of game of prisoner's base. The captains and colonels and knights-at-arms eternally came and went in the hostile camps with safe-conducts in their pockets. When any interesting character was taken prisoner, he was exchanged, after waiting with his captors for about the space of time usually occupied by a morning call. The losses of the garrison of Lathom in their sorties hardly amounted to the disaster caused by the fall of the familiar 'one Cossack' in the Crimean war." To some extent these remarks, though gratuitously sarcastic, are true. The notice concludes with: "Mr. Harrison Ainsworth clearly shares the opinion held by Mr. Thackeray in his later years, that love-scenes and the 'business' of a story are rather beneath the notice of a mature novelist. When he touches on facts which he has read about, his style becomes simple, straightforward, and more attractive than that of many fashionable romances." In 1877 Ainsworth published "The Fall of Somerset," and in 1878 another Stuart novel, "Beatrice Tyldesley," a story of the misfortunes of the exiled James II., and describing the Jacobite Trials in Lancashire in 1694. Another story of the Revolution of 1688, entitled "James the Second," and bearing Ainsworth's name on the title page, seems, from its style, choice of subject and treatment, to be from his pen, though I have been unable to find any note of it in any published account of his life and work. In 1880 he wrote "Beau Nash, or Bath in the Last Century," and issued in one volume three short stories under the title of the first, "Auriol."

On the 15th of September, 1881, in his seventy-seventh year, he received a splendid testimony of admiration and esteem from his native city. The then Mayor of Manchester (afterwards Sir Thomas Baker, now deceased) entertained him at a magnificent banquet in the Town Hall, "as an expression of the high esteem in which he is held by his fellow-townsmen and of his services to literature." Here were gathered to meet him the *élite* of Manchester literature and society. In proposing Ainsworth's health the Mayor remarked: "It forms no part of my duty to-night to offer any criticisms upon Mr. Ainsworth's voluminous works. I may, however, remark that he has embodied in them just so much of historical matter to give great interest to his stories; in point of fact, to make them most delightful reading. He has also done another thing which gives him a claim to the gratitude of every native of this county by introducing into his works the legends and characters of past times in this county, and by making the folk-lore and speech of Lancashire a distinctive literature. . . . It is fitting that I should say something about the amount of popularity which Mr. Ainsworth's works enjoy in this his native city. And on this point I am enabled to speak with some authority. In our Manchester public free libraries there are 250 volumes of Mr. Ainsworth's different works. During the last twelve months those volumes have been read 7,660 times, mostly by the artisan class of readers. And this means that twenty volumes of his works are being perused in Manchester by readers of the free libraries every day all the year through. My statistics would be incomplete if I did not tell you which of his books are most read. It would be a pleasure to me if I could only read Mr. Ainsworth's mind, and know what the conviction is on this point which he entertains. Whether I shall astonish

him, or whether the result of my inquiry agrees with the result which prevails in his own mind I really cannot tell. But I will give you six of his most popular works, and in the order in which they are most read. The first is 'The Tower of London.' The next is 'The Lancashire Witches.' The third is 'Old St. Paul's.' Then comes 'Windsor Castle,' 'The Miser's Daughter,' and 'The Manchester Rebels.'"

Later in the same month "Stanley Brereton," his last novel, was published, bearing a dedication to his host, to whom he says: "To you, moreover, and to the friends assembled on the occasion, I owe the gratifying title conferred on me of 'the Lancashire Novelist,' and I assure you I feel extremely proud of the designation." A few months later, January 3, 1882, Ainsworth died at Reigate, and was buried at Kensal Green Cemetery; the last of a brilliant coterie of authors, among whom the most prominent were himself, Dickens, Thackeray, Bulwer-Lytton, and Jerrold. He has left behind him, besides his literary fame, the memory of a man with as few failings as most people, blended with fine attributes that belong but to the few; a man beloved by his friends for his endearing qualities, and disliked by the enemies such men as he often have, because they knew nothing whatever about him; a man generous to all around him, and quick to feel the most trivial kindness to himself, and to perform, suggest, and sympathise with kindness to others; a man to whom humanity was a gospel and charity a practice.

There can be no doubt of the appropriateness of the title so happily bestowed upon Ainsworth—"The Lancashire Novelist." Of the authors whose work entitles them to the designation of "Lancashire Novelists," and they are not a few, none ever attained Ainsworth's degree of popularity,

lavishness of production, or prominence in English literature; and though many of their stories, perhaps, touch the very heart of Lancashire folk the more closely, because they are wholly redolent of the locality and the current vernacular, yet these qualities, true and human as they are, are generally too thoroughly local to enlist the sympathies of readers who are not sons and daughters of the Red Rose. Ainsworth's novels, in which his native county was concerned, contain very few examples of its dialect; "The Lancashire Witches" being the only one in which the folk tongue is at all prominent, and even there, in moments of excitement, the speakers forget themselves, and talk in "plain, gradely English." His chief concern with Lancashire was to describe its scenery, people, and customs, employing some historical event in which the county was especially prominent as the central interest. The novels so constructed form a fair history of Lancashire from the death of Elizabeth to that of William IV. In order of date they may be classed thus: "Guy Fawkes," 1605; "The Lancashire Witches," 1613; "The Leaguer of Lathom," 1642—51; "Beatrice Tyldesley," 1689—96; "Preston Fight, 1715," "The Manchester Rebels," 1745; and "Mervyn Clitheroe," 1805—37. In his reply to the Mayor at the banquet, Ainsworth made the following interesting comments upon his Lancashire stories: "Nothing has delighted me more than to be styled, as I have been, the 'Lancashire Novelist.' You have heard it said to-night that the most popular of my works is 'The Tower of London.' It may be so, but I can assure you that my desire has really been to write a Lancashire novel, a novel that should please the whole county, and I don't care whether it pleased anybody else. If I really thought that the designation which I have latterly received of the 'Lancashire Novelist' were justified, I should, indeed,

feel proud. I hope I may deserve it; I hope it may attach to my name. My great ambition has been to connect my name as an author with the city of my birth, and with this aim I have chosen certain subjects that would give me a chance of doing so. I sought to describe the Rebellion of '45, and the visit to Manchester of the unfortunate Prince Charles; with the old city as it existed at the period I was tolerably familiar, from the views I had seen of it, and could conjure up its picturesque black and white houses and other ancient structures, most of which, I grieve to say, have now entirely disappeared. In the days I refer to, there was a very strong Jacobite feeling in Lancashire, and especially amongst the oldest families in Manchester, many of whom were devoted to what they deemed the 'good cause.' Prominent amongst these was Dr. Byrom and his charming daughter Beppy, both of whom had always the strongest attraction for me. Tom Syddall, the Jacobite barber of Manchester, was likewise a favourite, as were Dr. Deacon and his sons, and Jemmy Dawson. In 'Beatrice Tyldesley' I have described the Jacobite trials in Manchester, in 1694. In 'The Leaguer of Lathom, a Tale of the Civil War in Lancashire,' and in 'Preston Fight; or, the Insurrection of 1715,' I had other periods to deal with and other parts of the county to depict; and in the locality of 'The Lancashire Witches' I had very picturesque and curious scenery to describe, and I strove to do justice to it. But it is in a modern story, portions of which may almost be termed autobiographical, that I have described my early days in Manchester and neighbourhood . . . my old school-fellows and schoolmasters, Dr. Smith and Dr. Elsdale, and I have now had my reward."

Besides the references in these stories to this part of England, he makes many, more or less marked, in others.

Many of his heroes and heroines are descended from Lancashire, Yorkshire, or Cheshire families. Especially is this so in his early novels, and to such an extent, that it would almost seem essential for the true and lasting happiness of a hero of many dangers, to be himself a Cestrian or Lancastrian, or comfortably wedded to a Lancashire witch. For all these reasons it may be generally agreed that the epithet, "The Lancashire Novelist," is most fittingly bestowed upon Ainsworth.

As will have been noticed from what I have already said of Ainsworth's novels, his inclination was to historical fiction. The late Professor Morley said on this point, that, "though readers have turned now [1881] to tales of another fashion, Ainsworth's novels have never been without the merit of great skill in the shaping of a story from historical material well studied and well understood. Ainsworth's strength has lain in the union of good, honest, antiquarian scholarship with art in the weaving of romance that is enlivened and not hindered by his knowledge of the past." And this, a candid, clever man, who finds considerable difficulty in keeping his superfluous knowledge from being obtrusive, will at once admit is praise indeed. To any one to whom history was, in youthful days, nothing more than a series of battles, murders, and sudden deaths, with unrememberable dates attached, desiring to possess a sane and profitable knowledge of the story of this country, a course of Ainsworth's novels may be recommended, and the recommendee will be quite as well versed in historical facts gathered from this source, as a prominent statesman who once publicly announced that he learned his English history from the plays of Shakespeare. For the benefit of aspiring politicians in like case, and to show to what extent Ainsworth derived his inspiration from English history, I give a list of his novels in historical order:—

"Merry England" (Richard II., 1381, Wat Tyler's Rebellion); "The Goldsmith's Wife" (Edward IV. and V. and Richard III., 1483); "Windsor Castle" (Henry VIII., 1529—1536); "Tower Hill" (Henry VIII., 1539—1542); "Constable of the Tower" (Henry VIII., 1547—1549); "Fall of Somerset" (Edward VI., 1549—1551); "Tower of London" (Mary, 1553—1554); "Cardinal Pole" (Mary, 1554—1558); "Guy Fawkes" (James I., 1604—1606); "Lancashire Witches" (James I., 1613); "Star Chamber" (James I.); "Spanish Match" (James I., 1623); "Leaguer of Lathom" (Charles I., 1642—51); "Boscobel" (Commonwealth, 1651); "Ovingdean Grange" (Commonwealth, 1651); "Old St. Paul's" (Charles II., 1665—1666); "Talbot Harland" (Charles II., 1670); "James II." (1688); "Beatrice Tyldesley" (William III., 1689—1696); "St. James's" (Anne, 1707—1714); "Preston Fight" (George I., 1715); "South Sea Bubble" (George I., 1720); "Miser's Daughter" (George II., 1744); "Manchester Rebels" (George II., 1745); "Lord Mayor of London" (George III., 1761). This goodly list is only approached by that of the works of Alexandre Dumas, on French history, extending from the fourteenth century to the battle of Waterloo. Ainsworth has been often compared with Dumas; properly where they have touched the same ground, as in "La Reine Margot" and "Crichton," and wrongly where there is nothing to compare except a list of stories as the foregoing.

The popularity of Ainsworth's early works was remarkable, when we consider that he was almost unknown to the reading public till the appearance of "Rookwood" in 1834. This novel, inartistic in construction, confused in plot, stagey in effect though it was, appeared at a fortunate time. The great Scotsman had just bequeathed his last contribution to literature. "Sketches by Boz" and the "Pickwick

Papers," which revealed Dickens to the world, had still to be written. Bulwer-Lytton had produced only "Pelham," "The Disowned," "Devereux," "Paul Clifford," and "Eugene Aram," none of them remarkable for anything; and was equivocating between dilettantism and serious work. Disraeli, with his "Vivian Grey," "Young Duke," "Contarini Fleming," and "Alroy," was not satiating the desires of readers to any appreciable extent. Catherine Crowe had not begun to out-Radcliffe Radcliffe, nor had Charles Lever or Samuel Warren put pen to paper. G. P. R. James' ubiquitous dark horseman had only just been born, and his particular forest was as yet merely a shrubbery of saplings, and his moon in her first quarter. Of all novelists of note, Jane Austen was the only one whose work had any symptoms of vitality. The public were wearying—had wearied long ago—of the inanities, one might say insanities—of the fashionable novel of the day, where lords and ladies languished through three volumes and met with accidents or fainted at inspired moments; where puppets—puppies, if you like—talked frocks and sentiment and marriage till the very air grew sick, in a peculiar language, smacking somewhat of the English, invented for the purpose, and patronised, among others, by Lady Blessington, who, unable to descend to the vulgarity of saying "cloudy sky," euphuised it "nebulous atmosphere." Into such doubtful society did Ainsworth, with his breezy style, introduce Dick Turpin, who soon cured it of langour with his remarkably cheerful popping of pistols, clashing of sabres, clinking of beakers and volleys of untranslatable oaths. A highwayman of doubtful morals was, at all events, a change from a semi-animated fashion plate. The public was still more delighted with "Crichton;" while "Jack Sheppard" was greeted as a bosom friend by every person fond of

a thoroughgoing villain; though Pecksniffian critics, whose experience—I suppose—enabled them alone to decide between morality and its opposite, and dictate to the world what it might read and what not, were tearing their passions to tatters to have Jack Sheppard (literally) burned after he had been (fictionally) hanged. But readers would not have it. To them, as to voyaging sailors, after days of dead calm a hurricane was rapture.

The height of Ainsworth's reputation was attained in the fifties when "*Mervyn Clitheroe*" was published. Dickens was giving the world the best that was in him, "*David Copperfield*" having appeared a few years before; and the whole of Thackeray's novels were public property. The taste in fiction was, however, gradually changing. From the novel of historical incident, of which Ainsworth was the foremost writer of the time, readers, with the spread of education, were able to appreciate more largely, and were turning more and more to the novels of character and the life of the day, of which school Dickens and Thackeray were the leaders, and Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, the Brontës and the Trollopes, the chief disciples. Ainsworth endeavoured desultorily to keep pace with the new comers in such novels as "*Myddleton Pomfret*" and "*Hilary St. Ives*;" but his historical style, now a fixed quantity, could not be eliminated, and not being suited to this class of story, he abandoned the endeavour and returned to his English history; and, though writing as well as ever, he had young and strong rivals to contend with. He held his own amongst them, and it is not so much the fact, as has been so often remarked, that his popularity was waning, as that, the standard of fiction being higher, and novelists of good quality more numerous than at any previous period in the history of English literature, public appreciation was more

diffused. In a starry heaven even a planet loses some of its lustre.

The interest of Ainsworth's novels does not centre in any subtle analyses of motive or descriptions of character. Of the whole population of his novels, a census of which, excluding crowds, would run into thousands, there is not one character that stands in the memory apart from his fellows; not one individual who is recognised as a creation. The veriest accidental bystanders of Dickens live: Ainsworth's heroes only exist. Dickens' people, if eccentric, are real "meat" ones: Ainsworth's are chessmen, with no spontaneous thought or individuality, and possess intrinsically such power and fate as the inevitable law of history has assigned them, and, in combination, as their mover, within the limits of that law, had the wit to produce. This is necessarily the limitation of the novelist who chooses historical events for his background and well-known personages for his players. Modern historical fiction, that of Stanley Weyman, Anthony Hope, and Dr. Conan Doyle, differentiates itself from Ainsworth's in the circumstance that, whatever the event, the hero of the story is generally a man unknown to or ignored by fame, and the figures well known to history are carefully kept in the background. This allows the writer as much liberty as he requires for the presentation of living character; and this is one good reason for the reality of the stories of Dumas. Ainsworth's great and almost unrivalled characteristic was the vivid narration of incident, a power of paramount importance in historical narrative. From the inexhaustible fund of his historical and antiquarian knowledge he placed before the reader a wealth of detail that made a levée or a battle seem an event of yesterday from the pen of an eye-witness. His style was brisk and vivacious, and he related an execution with as much gusto

as though it were a banquet. When his story was once well under weigh, and this was generally about the beginning of the second chapter, there was no further delay. Event trod upon the heels of incident, and Destiny sped like Mercury. A story once begun, the reader feels unsatisfied till he finishes it; a pleasant task that liking and not mere duty sees to the end.

Many of Ainsworth's novels have been translated into the German, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Russian tongues; and have been, and are, read, at all events, in France, as novels of English history, much as we here read Dumas on the story of his own country. The editions of Ainsworth's works are so many that their titles occupy about twenty-four pages of the British Museum Catalogue. And this, though the last, is not the least weighty link in the chain of evidence of Ainsworth's deserved popularity and importance, not only in the literature of Lancashire, but of the English-speaking world.





THE "CONCEIT" IN LITERATURE.

BY THOMAS NEWBIGGING.

THE quality in literature which we describe as the "conceit" is not necessarily confined to ideas, which may be natural enough, but extends also to mannerisms in the language employed in expressing the ideas. When the mannerism is natural to a writer—when it is unforced, though peculiar, as may be assumed in the case of Carlyle and Browning, it hardly comes within the category of the conceit, but is properly designated the style of the writer.

I do not propose to deal with the singularities of style, or even the glaring mannerisms of different authors, but with the matter of their thoughts, and, to make myself clear, I will define the conceit—though definitions are always hazardous—as a fanciful or fantastical notion, often taking the form of a comparison or similitude, which, however, has seldom its counterpart in actual life, and therefore no place in experience—a kind of puny flight of the imagination, sometimes lacking in dignity, but not wanting in a certain attractive grace. Hallam describes it as "one modification of that vitiated taste which sacrifices all naturalness of writing and speaking for the sake of display." This description of Hallam's is true only of the ordinary and most flagrant class of conceits, I would

not admit its accuracy as applied to all. It is too limited in its scope. The range of the conceit in literature is wider than to be limited by the circumscribing line within which a vitiated taste is the impelling power.

It was eminently characteristic of the poets and even the prose writers of the latter half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. But it is found in varying quantity in literature of every kind and in every age. Perhaps it occurs most frequently in philosophical and lyrical poetry. It is rarely poetry in the highest sense except when used by a master hand. In ordinary hands there is in it an artificiality which detracts from the high poetical quality. But, if it is rarely poetry of the first order, it is often on the borderland of it. Sometimes a whole play or an epic is a conceit throughout. The miracle or mystery plays are examples of this class. Drayton's "Polyolbion" is an interminable chain of conceits expressed in thirty books and in wonderfully poetical language, its long Alexandrine lines affording by no means unpleasant reading.

Some poetical conceits are charming, others commonplace, and not a few are ludicrous and even repulsive. An instance of this latter may be seen in Dryden's lines on the death of Lord Hastings, written, to be sure, in his unfledged days. These are so objectionable on the score of nineteenth century taste as to repel quotation.

Donne, who wrote in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, is a chief sinner in the matter of puerile conceits. His was, notoriously, the age in England of stilted poetry. The poets of that time, to quote Hallam again, "laboured after conceits, or novel turns of thought, usually false, and resting upon some equivocation of language, or exceedingly remote analogy . . . few of Donne's poems are good for much; the conceits have not even the merit of

being intelligible; it would perhaps be difficult to select three passages that we should care to read again." The verses addressed to his wife are a favourable example of Donne's style:—

If we be two, we are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as that comes home.

So shalt thou be to me, who must
Like th' other foot eccentric run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes an end where I begun.

The fame of Donne, happily, does not rest on his eccentricities, but on his strength of character, and other higher qualities as chronicled in his life by Izaak Walton.

The poetry of the "Emblem" writers is chiefly made up of conceits, and as the lyrical spirit is absent from most of it, it is unattractive, and becomes tiresome in the perusal. It is stilted and artificial, as though made to order—a kind of faddist poetry. It may be said with truth that a little verse of this kind goes a long way. Some will be inclined to question whether it deserves the name of poetry at all.

Heraldry (scarcely, however, to be classed as literature) is essentially the science of conceits. That it should be esteemed as a science and flourish and be pursued with seriousness, is confirmation strong that the conceit, in one form or another, is indigenous to the human mind.

The ancient mythologies afford many examples of conceits of a highly poetical and imaginative cast. The fabled

creatures of antiquity—the griffin, the centaur, the phoenix, the mermaids and mermen that inhabit the caves of ocean, are all in their idea vigorous conceits. Truly these ancients had a weird gift of imagination—an imagination ruled by superstition rather than regulated by reason. In the man-childhood of the world such inventions were the outcome of a strong simplicity, a childish yet powerful fancy (paradoxical though these expressions are), uncontrolled by any logical faculty.

The conceit of Cupid with his bow and arrows is exquisitely pretty, and will never die while human nature endures. Appropriate, also, are Old Time with his scythe and Death with his dart.

Though I am young and cannot tell
Either what Death or Love is, well,
Yet I have heard they both bear darts,
And both do aim at human hearts ;
And then again, I have been told,
Love wounds with heat, as Death with cold ;
So that I fear they do but bring
Extremes to touch, and mean one thing.

So sings or says rare Ben Jonson. Clearly, the interest here is not in any strong poetical quality possessed by the verses, but in the quaintness of the ideas, and the peculiar turns of expression.

As might be expected, the conceit is nurtured and thrives in love ditties. The lover who is a poet (and what lover is not a poet) has in all ages and in all countries, attempted to paint in words the likeness of his mistress's eye-brows, her neck, features and form, and has ransacked the realms of nature and art for that purpose.

John Lyly, the old dramatist, commonly called the Euphuist, has a bright little song, full of conceits, about the god of love:—

Cupid and my Campaspe played
 At cards for kisses—Cupid paid;
 He stakes his quiver, bow and arrows,
 His mother's doves, and team of sparrows;
 Loses them too; then down he throws
 The coral of his lip, the rose
 Growing on's cheek (but none knows how),
 With these, the crystal of his brow,
 And then the dimple of his chin;
 All these did my Campaspe win.
 At last he set her both his eyes,
 She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
 O love! has she done this to thee?
 What shall, alas! become of me?

Here is a full bundle of conceits, so felicitously and dramatically put as almost to make genuine poetry.

The love ditties of the early dramatists abound in fantastical images, many of them startling in their incongruity, and others again so charming in their quaintness that they linger in the mind, and in the prosaic round of modern everyday life the vagrant strain will sometimes rise unbidden to the memory if not to the tongue.

Ben Jonson's "Drink to me only" is one of the finest examples of the conceit in poetry in the language. The verses have become classic, a result to some extent due, no doubt, to the music with which they are associated. This has made them household words, though their intrinsic merits are such as would have assured them a place in any anthology. The lines in Sir John Suckling's ballad on a wedding form another good example:—

Her feet beneath her petticoat
 Like little mice stole in and out
 As if they feared the light.

There is a daintiness about the lines, a quaintness in the idea, and the picture which the mind realises is a pretty one. Herrick has a similar fancy, not so well expressed—rather clumsily expressed, indeed:—

Her pretty feet, like snails, did creep
 A little out, and then,
 As if they play'd at Bo-peep,
 Did soon draw in again.

I do not think that this is quite in Herrick's usual happy manner. The comparison is far-fetched, though in a less or greater degree all conceits have this far-fetched character. Herrick is at his best in "A Ring Presented to Julia"—

Julia, I bring to thee this ring,
 Made for thy finger fit;
 To show by this, that our love is,
 Or should be, like to it.

Close though it be, the joint is free ;
 So when love's yoke is on,
 It must not gall, or fret at all,
 With hard oppression.

But it must play still either way,
 And be too, such a yoke,
 As not too wide, to over-slide,
 Or be so strait to choke.

So we, who wear this beam, must rear
 Ourselves to such a height,
 As that the stay of either may
 Create the burden light.

And as this round is nowhere found
 To flaw, or else to sever ;
 So let our love as endless prove,
 And pure as gold for ever.

Herrick is very largely made up of conceits, and although he uses them deftly and almost naturally, his poetry is apt to cloy from this cause. The indefinable lyrical grace of Herrick would, however, suffice to float a cargo of less attractive conceits than his adown the ages.

Most of the love songs current before the time of Burns were overladen with conceits of an incongruous and artificial kind. There were exceptions of course, but, as a rule, we have Damon and Aminta, Corydon and Phyllis,

Daphnis and Chloe, Edwin and Angelina making love in inflated metaphors in impossible bowers. The restoration of song to the simplicity of nature is only one of the incomparable services to literature and human life rendered by Burns.

Wordsworth, notwithstanding his simple naturalness, has indulged in at least one conceit, to me a very flagrant one, and it occurs in his well-known and oftenest quoted lines: "She was a Phantom of Delight":—

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament.

The language, though possessing a certain grace and appropriateness to the subject, is on the whole forced and heavy. It lacks the simplicity of nature, and is scarcely poetical. In my judgment it wears an after-dark churchyard aspect, whilst the last line savours more of cabinet bric-à-brac or of the collection of rarities kept under glass in the fine art museum than of the garden and the healthful open country. These opening lines appear to me to be a blemish on an otherwise noble poem.

When the conceit is a happy one, neat and graceful and well expressed, it becomes popular and endures; otherwise, it detracts from the writer's fame. A striking instance of this detraction is seen in the poetry of what has been aptly called "The Spasmodic School." Along with much genuine poetry the writings of the members of this school bristle with conceits. Many of their images are natural and good and of high poetical quality, but there is so much of exaggeration in most of them—they are such evident conceits, accompanied with so much attitudinising, that the fame of all the poets of this school has suffered in consequence.

Alexander Smith, the chief of the small band of spasmodists, was, with much poetic insight and a powerful gift of expression, the greatest sinner in the matter of strong conceits. "Tis not for me," he says—

"Tis not for me, ye Heavens ! 'tis not for me
To fling a Poem, like a comet, out,
Far-splendouring the sleepy realms of night.

And, apostrophising the moon :—

Sorrowful moon ! seeming so drowned in woe,
A queen, whom some grand battle-day has left
Unkingdomed and a widow, while the stars,
Thy handmaidens, are standing back in awe,
Gazing in silence on thy mighty grief.

Again :—

Soul is a moon, Love is its loveliest phase.

Addressing a lady he says :—

And as thou passest some mid-forest glade,
The simple woodman stands amazed, as if
An angel flashed by on his gorgeous wings.

Again :—

How few read books aright ! most souls are shut
By sense from grandeur, as a man who snores
Night-capped and wrapt in blankets to the nose,
Is shut out from the night, which, like a sea,
Breaketh for ever on a strand of stars.

And, finally :—

The bridegroom sea
Is toying with the shore, his wedded bride,
And, in the fulness of his marriage joy,
He decorates her tawny brow with shells,
Retires a space, to see how fair she looks,
Then proud, runs up to kiss her.

It is needless to multiply instances. The similes I have quoted are concoctions, not inspirations. In other words they are laboured conceits ; imagined, doubtless, but not the spontaneous lightning-flashes of imagination that we invariably find in Shelley, for example. Reading these and

other forceful lines in the "Life Drama," it takes a little time and consideration to realise their nature. They communicate a whirling sensation to the brain. We have to stand still and collect our wits, or take a whirl in the opposite direction, in order to steady our judgment and prevent our being carried off our feet.

No, it was not for the Spasmodists to fling a poem like a comet out, though in a sense their productions have all the pronounced cometic qualities. Let us be fair, however. That Alexander Smith was a poet is unquestionable, and it would be easy to give abundant proof of this, if proof were needed. But our point is that he, and others of the school, injured their reputation as poets by their indulgence in a rushing, almost bewildering torrent of metaphors and hyperboles.

When the quality of humour is associated with the conceit, the latter, even though incongruous, is not only tolerated but enjoyed and cherished by generations of readers. Nearly all Charles Lamb's conceits, of which there are a few to be found in the "Essays of Elia," are of this acceptable and enduring kind. All Dickens' novels afford abundant examples of this. The conceit is strongly accentuated in many of his characters and descriptions. But his gifts of natural feeling and humour play with the lambent flame of genius round his exaggerations, and give a life-likeness to what would else be only the broadest caricature when it is not the barest conceit. Indeed, whatever ennobling quality redeems the conceit from the commonplace, whether humour, or sarcasm, or irony (as we find it in Dean Swift), confers upon it the gift of enduring life. The examples I have given from Smith are not to be despised as conceits; on the contrary, there is about them a certain charm of beauty and appositeness which breathes into them the breath of life.

Gilbert, our modern librettist and playwright, is happy in his humorous conceits. His works are full of them. He seizes upon them and employs them, however, because they *are* conceits pure and simple, and with no attempt at make-believe that they are poetry. He has a full consciousness of their use and value. But, in truth, many of his songs, though each based on a conceit, are poetical almost in spite of himself: bright, sparkling, musical, rich in fancy. I need only mention "Is life a boon?" from "The Yeomen of the Guard," and the other from "The Gondoliers," "Take a pair of sparkling eyes."

Fairy mythology is a conceit throughout, and one of the pleasantest kind. In this department of literature the most exquisite gems of fancy are to be found. I have said that the conceit in a master-hand becomes poetry of the highest quality. Shakespeare with his dainty touch has brightened his pages with all that a delicate imagination could invent on such a theme, investing the elfin crew with a reality surpassing truth. In a "A Midsummer Night's Dream" he gave his fancy the rein, and we have a delightful play, the very foundation and machinery of which are a conglomerate of conceits. With this difference, however, as compared with the work of others less favoured by the gods: the language and superstructure of the play are everything with Shakespeare, the skeleton framework of conceits nothing. So in "The Tempest" we revel in a maze of rare conceits which are made the vehicle of conveying the wisest lessons to mankind. But Shakespeare was exceptional in all his work, and in his hands the conceit assumed a breadth and dignity which it does not generally possess. Perhaps, if one must be critical, an exception may be made of the Sonnets. In these the conceit is largely present, and often unredeemed by the genius of the author.

The English writers, both of prose and poetry, of the earlier half of the present century (Dickens excepted) exhibit an almost perfect immunity from the conceit. It does not follow, however, that this immunity should be made the criterion of excellence in a writer. Its presence or absence is more a question of idiosyncrasy, and for readers its tolerance lies in the handling, for the most part. What is to be reprobated is the straining after it with greediness with a view to novel effect. This is a sure sign not only of the want of the divine afflatus, but of general poverty of intellect. The genius of a Shakespeare, a Goethe, and a Victor Hugo—three names that may be classed together in the order given—used it as a foil to the presentation of lofty themes, and never for its own sake. But that they did use it at all, is sufficient warranty for its presence as a literary attribute.

The conceit is becoming a predominant note in present-day poetry, and in much of the prose, as it appears to me, with the result that they are not literature of the highest, or, indeed, of a high class. It has developed in the hands of later writers to a degree which is often painful in its prominence. These are wanting in what Lander aptly describes as "the sweet temperature of thought." Whereas formerly the conceit for the most part was of the *petit* order—small, dainty, graceful—it is now, in the hands of some of our modern literary athletes, both male and female, of the bombastical kind, large, unkempt, unattractive.

With recent poetry there is less fault to find than with the prose, but, striking though some of it is, it is lacking in the reserve strength of genius; it often steps aside to grasp the *outré* both in sentiment and diction, and so it is far from attaining to the grandeur of the nobler strains of some dead singers; nor will it so attain until it ceases to feed on confections however delectable, and returns to the browsing ground of Mother Nature.



VITA ÆTERNA.

IN MEMORIAM CHRISTINÆ G. ROSSETTI.

I.

THINE accents echo in mine ears
Though what thou wert has ceased to be,
Thus many a voice the spirit hears
That sounds not audibly.

And thine was like a rivulet's,
When April floods the land with praise,
Shy Nightingale, whose sweet regrets
Made bitter-sweet our days!

When songs like thine on earth are heard
A deep and holy joy they move,
As if some pure transcendent bird
Sang more than mortal love.

And more than mortal love was thine
Eternal passion—'twas a fire
Within a cloud—a deep, divine,
Unquenchable desire.

We hear thy songs; our spirits glow;
And many see who erst were blind;
Such influence from thy mind doth flow
To light the baser mind.

II.

Thy smile was generous as a kiss
From sweet maternal lips; its light
Was beauty from the source of bliss,
Thou holy eremite.

For looking long at Heaven, thy face
Reflected Heaven; 'twas glorified:
Perchance we also, by this grace,
Shone brighter at thy side.

III.

O poignant thought! Hast thou not missed
The flame of life's delicious morn?
Love gave me blooms of amethyst,
And thee a flowerless thorn.

For me earth's ever-varying scene,
And seas that thou hast never viewed;
Clear mountain air; the fairy sheen
Of desert solitude:

Whilst thou hast lingered in thy square
And watched the clouds with hungry eyes;
Yet, with an angel singing there,
That place was Paradise!

Once only didst thou seek the South—
Till then a hope most sweet and strange—
Returning with a trembling mouth,
And troubled eyes of change.

IV.

Dear soul that fasted when the feast
Was laid before thee, Love once came
Like morning magic from the east;
Yet love was but a name:

Yea, but a name, though wide and far
Thy halcyon songs have made it heard ;
For Love was but a splendid star
To thee, a lonely bird.

V.

Inscrutable God's purpose lies
Wide-written on the changing earth ;
Unsolvèd still the mysteries
Of Love and Death and Birth.

Change overcomes the very deep
That holds the wild and quivering sun ;
Some day his lessening orb will sleep
And all days be as one.

Now thou art changed, and there are men
Who tell us that thou dost not live :
Doubts issue forth like vapours when
Wan faith is fugitive :

Doubts issue forth from Time's abyss ;
The cold grave yawns ; Life's end must come :
We cry, "One word ! One look ! One kiss !"
Alas, the dead are dumb !

Yet should the brightness, wont to play
About thee, be for ever dead,
We dreamers are but lamps of clay
Lit, and extinguishèd :—

Chimeras, phantoms—burning bright
With splendour of elusive dreams—
That move, like meteors, through a night
Made darker by their gleams.

VI.

Vain, vain the thought! I hope, I feel
Thy soul remains with us and knows
At last what Life and Love conceal—
The meaning of our woes.

Death is but slumber: some arise
Therefrom, and know a lovelier morn
Than that which lightens in the skies
For man of woman born:

Whilst others—yea, the greater part
Of those who falter, fail and die—
Sleep on with an unthrobbing heart
Through all eternity.

But thou hast issued from thy sleep,
With fuller knowledge born of pain;
To hear the deep call unto deep,
To sing sweet songs again.

Unchanged thy spirit, save, perchance,
With greater happiness more fair;
More lovely grows the countenance
In Heaven's benignant air.

Beyond our ken thou art, but still
We feel thee near us day by day,
Guiding with thy auspicious will
Our steps upon the way.

VII.

For thee deep Arno's flowery meads
Are spread, and Dante lingers there
To show thee how the lily feeds
On sweet Italian air.

There, too, in some poetic haunt
Grave Milton thou may'st haply meet,
Whose mortal music angels chaunt,
Thronged at the master's feet.

Thy mortal music, too, they sing,
And friends lost only to be found
Hearken to songs that charm The King,
And thrill the laurel-crowned.

VIII.

Now may'st thou seek the mountain chain
When morning leaps from crest to crest,
And see the misty leagues of plain
Shine like a dove's bright breast.

To thee the seas their powers display ;
The clouds are now thy charioteers ;
Where, through the undiminished day,
Thou smilest on thy peers.

Now thou dost know the lovely speech
Of birds—the language of the pure—
And truths beyond our little reach
In fields of thought obscure.

The voices of the silent trees,
The utterance of the springing flowers ;
Thou wilt have cognizance of these
With thy perfected powers.

To thee there is nor far nor near ;
Thee space and time do not impede ;
Like thought thou rovest—flitting here
And there where Love may lead.

IX.

Within each petal of the rose
A perfect rainbow may be seen ;
The lily through her pallor shows
A seven-hued mystic sheen.

Nor flower nor tree that breathes and blooms
By virtue of the azure skies
But guards more mystery than in tombs
Of ancient Egypt lies.

The riddles that we may not solve
Perplex us in the world we know,
Their mazes day by day evolve
Where knowledge cannot go.

Stars give no hope, immensely bright ;
Fierce with unutterable fires :
They lure us trembling to their light
To find but blazing pyres.

But promises are written clear
Upon the petals of each flower,
And hopes are hid in beauty here,
To fill the soul with power.

For Heaven is near us, and we hai
At times a light upon the mind,
That issues from beyond the Veil
And not from humankind.

Some voice with God's voice in it thrills
The soul a moment—some sweet strain
Of music moves us and fulfils
The heart with rapturous pain.

At times a glimpse of ocean wakes
Within us what is more than man;
Or, breathed upon, the spirit makes
Music æolian.

So when in mood exultant sings
The soul, we surely apprehend
That near us beat the unwearied wings
Of some transfigured friend.

For Heaven is always present here,
Not in the stars beyond the sun,
And Heaven being near us thou art near:
For Heaven and earth are one.

X.

The first pale crocus of the year
Shall brave the wind to court thy view;
Thou still art living, though thy bier
Bore rosemary and rue.

O, modest, tender, perfect soul,
Whose sacrificial life sublime
Placed thee beyond Fame's wide control,
Triumphant over Time,—

Thou standest in Perfection's place,
Communing with the Holy Dove;
Made one with Beauty, Truth, and Grace,
And comraded by Love.

The spirit has eternal youth:
What once thou wert, not thee we mourn;
For thou hast found the glorious truth,
And, dead, thou art re-born.

ROWLAND THIRLMERE.



HENRY PURCELL.

BY ROBERT PEEL.

Mark how the lark and linnet sing ;

With rival notes

They strain their warbling throats,

To welcome in the spring.

But in the close of night,

When Philomel begins her heavenly lay,

They cease their mutual spite,

Drink in her music with delight,

And, listening, silently obey.

So ceased the rival crew, when Purcell came ;

They sung no more, or only sung his fame ;

Struck dumb, they all admired the god-like man :

The god-like man,

Alas ! too soon retired,

As he too late began.

We beg not hell our Orpheus to restore :

Had he been there,

Their sovereign's fear

Had sent him back before.

The power of harmony too well they knew :

He long ere this had tuned their jarring sphere,

And left no hell below.

The heavenly choir, who heard his notes from high,

Let down the scale of music from the sky :

They handed him along,

And all the way he taught, and all the way they sung.

Ye brethren of the lyre and tuneful voice,

Lament his lot ; but at your own rejoice :

Now live secure, and linger out your days ;

The gods are pleased alone with Purcell's lays,

Nor know to mend their choice.

—DRYDEN.

WHILE the whole country is ringing with commemora-
tions and eulogiums of England's greatest native
singer, it would ill become us, citizens of the chosen home

of Hallé, and inhabitants of one of the most musical counties in the musical north, not to pay our contribution and lay our wreath on the tomb of him who sang so sweetly some two hundred years ago.

"Music and Poetry have ever been acknowledged Sisters, which, walking hand in hand, support each other; as Poetry is the harmony of Words, so Musick is that of Notes; and as Poetry is a Rise above Prose and Oratory, so is Musick the exaltation of Poetry. Both of them may excel apart, but sure they are most excellent when they are joyn'd, because nothing is then wanting to either of their Perfections: for thus they appear like Wit and Beauty in the same Person." So wrote Henry Purcell in 1691.

As this was true two hundred years ago, so is it true to-day; also is it true that—

Music is medicine to the mind.

and that there is—

Such wondrous power to music given
It elevates the soul to heaven.

These things being admitted and approved, I will pass to the consideration of him whom we are bound to honour as one of the pioneers or founders of our English School of Music.

It seems a pity that more is not known about Henry Purcell, and that the details and incidents of his life have not been more carefully preserved, especially so, when it is clear that opportunities to that end offered themselves both to Sir John Hawkins and Dr. Burney. Neither of them appears to have properly appreciated the position, and the result is that much authentic information and many interesting facts which might have been placed on record are now lost to us for ever. The exact date of his

birth is not known, but there is no doubt that it took place in or about the year 1658. He is said to have been born in St. Ann's Lane, Old Pye Street, Westminster; but there seems to be a doubt even about this.

His father, Henry Purcell, was an accomplished musician, and a gentleman of the Chapel Royal. In that capacity he sang in the choir at the coronation of Charles II. He was also a singing man at Westminster Abbey, and master of the chorister boys in that church; in addition, he was music copyist at the Abbey, an honourable and important post, and a member of the Chapel Royal Band. Young Purcell was therefore in a position to profit by the condition in which his earliest days were passed.

Unfortunately Henry Purcell, senior, died when our subject was only six years old, but seeing that the child was almost immediately afterwards admitted as a chorister of the Chapel Royal, there can be little doubt that the parent had so carefully fostered and assisted the natural genius of his son as to enable him to acquire sufficient skill even at that early age to take part in the musical services at the Chapel. It was too a happy circumstance for young Henry, that he had been committed to the care of his uncle, Thomas Purcell, who warmly and affectionately strove to supply the place of the dead parent by adopting the orphan as his son. The uncle was also a skilful musician, being a gentleman of the Chapel Royal, and holding, among other appointments, that of chief, or leader, of the King's band of four and twenty fiddlers. Neither father nor uncle appear to have written much music, as with the exception of a few chants, some still in use, none of their compositions have come down to us.

For the first few years of Purcell's life as a singer, Captain Henry Cooke was master of the boys at the

Chapel Royal, and he had undoubtedly much influence upon the young lad. This Captain Cooke was not only a composer of anthems, but a singer of them as well. Quaint old Pepys makes many entries in his diary about Cooke. He has one, under date August 12, 1660:—"After sermon a brave anthem of Captain Cooke's which he himself sang and the King was well pleased with." Then, as if to prove that there is nothing new under the sun, not even an experience, he, in another place, says:—"A poor, dry sermon, but a very good anthem of Captain Cooke's afterwards."

Purcell profited by Cooke's instructions for a period of eight years. Is it not extremely probable that during this time, from the age of six to that of fourteen—an important time in the life of a clever boy—young Purcell's genius was greatly influenced by the man who was teaching him? We know that many of Purcell's anthems still in use in our cathedrals were written while he was yet a youth and a pupil of the soldier musician. The generally accepted idea is that to Pelham Humphries and Dr. Blow must be given all the credit of fostering and guiding Purcell's genius. In fact, on Dr. Blow's monument in Westminster Abbey, it is stated that he was "master of the famous Henry Purcell." I do not in the least desire to minimise what is due to these two worthies, and much is due to them, especially to the last mentioned because he was just the man Purcell required, but I think Captain Cooke should have his due share of credit also.

As in the case of most musical geniuses, the divine stream began to flow early. A little three-part song, published in 1667, "Sweet Tyranness, I now resign,"* is now thought to have been Purcell's first effort, he being then

* This may originally have been intended as an air or song, but it was published as a part song.

nine years old. When he was eleven he wrote a piece entitled, "The Address of the Children of the Chapel Royal to the King and their Master, Captain Cooke, on his Majestie's Birthday, A.D. 1670, composed by Master Purcell, one of the children of the said Chapel."

Cooke was succeeded as "Master" by Pelham Humphries. Humphries was an admirable musician, and doubtless saw that he would have a worthy successor in young Purcell. Fortunately Purcell, although no doubt greatly assisted and encouraged by Humphries, had stamina enough to prevent himself from falling into a mere copyist of his master's style. That style was largely the result of the frivolity of the French school, as Humphries had been sent to Paris by Charles to study under Lully. Humphries died in 1674, at the age of twenty-seven, having been "master of the children" for about two years. Some of his chants are still in daily use, and had he lived longer we should have had more good music from his pen.

Humphries was succeeded as master by Dr. John Blow, under whom Purcell studied, and from whom he must have received valuable assistance and instruction. The relations between Blow and Purcell were peculiarly pleasant, and they remind us of those similar ones that existed between Haydn and Mozart. Probably it was at Blow's suggestion that Purcell was appointed Copyist to the Abbey in 1676—not Organist, as has often been supposed. The latter appointment he obtained four years later, when Dr. Blow resigned the post, as is believed, in his favour. Purcell was only twenty-two years of age when he thus secured one of the very first musical positions in England.

With regard to some of the work he was doing about this period it seems very probable that Purcell had as much to do with what is known as "Locke's Music to 'Macbeth'" as Locke himself. Locke was, and had been, on the most

friendly terms with the Purcell family, and he and Purcell were often together. Locke writes from the Savoy, March 16:—

“Dear Harry,—Some of the gentlemen of His Majesties Musick will honor my poor lodgings with their company this evening, and I would have you come and join them. Bring with thee, Harry, thy last anthem, and also the canon we tried over together at our last meeting.—Thine, in all kindness, M. LOCKE.”

That Locke did write music to “Macbeth” is certain, for some of it is still in existence, but it does not bear much resemblance to that which is popularly known as his. I am now citing Cummings’ “Life of Purcell.” It may be added that the “Macbeth” music has many Purcell-like touches, and that a copy of the score in Purcell’s own youthful hand exists to-day. Further, many old MS. copies have Purcell’s name attached as composer. On the other hand, Locke’s contemporaries generally attributed the music to him, and when the piece was produced at the Duke’s Theatre, Locke was spoken of as the composer. While inclining to the Purcell theory, I am quite willing that this question should be considered as one more insolvable riddle. Whether he did or did not write that music, we find managers of theatres giving him employment. In 1676 he composed music for three plays, Shadwell’s “Epsom Wells,” Dryden’s “Aurenge-Zebe,” and Shadwell’s “Libertine.” It may be mentioned in passing that the libretto of the “Libertine” is founded on the same story as that adopted by Mozart in “Don Giovanni” about a century later. In the following year he composed the music, solo and chorus, of an Ode, “On the Death of his Worthy Friend, Mr. Matthew Locke, musick composer in ordinary to His Majesty, and Organist of Her Majesties Chappel, who Dyed in August, 1677.”

In 1678 Purcell resigned his post as copyist, probably in order to have more time for study and composition. The year 1680 saw several pieces of dramatic music from his pen, but one especially, the opera of "Dido and Æneas." Cummings says: "'Dido and Æneas' will always remain a monument to Purcell's extraordinary genius; it is in perfect opera form, with an entire absence of dialogue, the whole of the libretto being set in recitative, solos, duets, and chorus. . . . Had there been a public demand for absolute music-drama, or even a proper appreciation of a work cast in such a mould, the composer had arisen who possessed the necessary genius, inspiration, and feeling for building up a school of opera which would have proved a model for his own and succeeding generations." But Purcell, like many other gifted mortals, was in advance of his time, and, so far as is known, he never afterwards attempted a similar work. Dr. Parry says, "when compared with all the operatic work which preceded it, it is a phenomenon which is almost inexplicable." And yet it was written for a ladies' school!

In 1681 Purcell married, and in July of the following year he was appointed organist of the Chapel Royal. This appointment was doubly welcome, for the position brought him additional honour and income.

The next year, 1683, saw Purcell's first publication, entitled, "Sonata's of III parts. Two Viollins and Basse to the Organ or Harpsichord, &c., &c." To show the difference between those days and ours, Purcell, in his preface, thinks it necessary to explain the meaning of several musical terms, which are as well known to us to-day as the alphabet. He says: "Ingenious Reader . . . it remains only that the English Practitioner be enform'd that he will find a few terms of art perhaps unusual to him, the chief of which are these following:—*Adagio* and *Grave*,

which imports nothing but a very slow movement. *Presto*, *Largo*, and *Vivace*, a very brisk, swift, or fast movement. *Piano*, soft. The Author has no more to add, but his hearty wishes, that his Book may fall into no other hands but theirs who carry their Musical Souls about them . . . Vale." If this be a correct copy of the original, it will be noticed that the word "largo" had a different meaning then from what it has now.

It is impossible in this paper to notice all the compositions of Purcell, but about the year 1687 he wrote a "Quickstep," which soon became popular and familiar to the soldiers. Some one, it is thought Lord Wharton, the Irish Viceroy, a little time after, used it as a vehicle for making known the words of a song called "Lillibullero." This song, which poured contempt upon the Irish and Papists, was for a time in everybody's mouth, and, as Bishop Burnet says, "A foolish ballad . . . that made an impression on the army that cannot be imagined by those that saw it not. . . . Never had so slight a thing so great an effect." The Viceroy "boasted that the song had sung a deluded Prince out of the three kingdoms." Sterne tells us that Uncle Toby was continually whistling it, and it is said to have "contributed not a little towards the great Revolution of 1688."

Strangely enough, in 1688, Purcell again became copyist to the Abbey, which post, as we have before seen, he had resigned. He never seems to have been idle, for in 1689, among other things, he wrote music in commemoration of the accession of William and Mary. This was performed in the Merchant Taylors' Hall, at the cost of £100, on the gathering of the natives of the county of York, from which circumstance the ode is known as "The Yorkshire Feast Song," and the music became extremely popular.

Purcell was now writing freely for the theatres, and about this time appeared the music of "The Tempest," in which are found "Come unto these yellow sands" and "Full fathom five"; also the music to Dryden's "Amphitryon," about which Dryden himself says: "What has been wanting on my part has been abundantly supplied by the Excellent Composition of Mr. Purcell, in whose Person we have at length found an Englishman equal with the best abroad." In 1691, he wrote the music to Dryden's "King Arthur." This was one of his most successful efforts, and contained the solo and chorus, "Come, if you dare." Unfortunately no complete copy of this music exists, but what there is left has more than once been revived with success. The following year he wrote the music to the "Indian Queen," in which we find "Ye twice ten hundred deities," which Dr. Burney considered the best recitative in the English language, and "I attempt from love's sickness to fly."

Very much music of Purcell's has been lost, as, for instance, that written to the "Fairy Queen," an adaptation from Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." In the London Gazette of October 13, 1700, there is this advertisement: "The score of the musick for the 'Fairy Queen,' set by the late Mr. Henry Purcell, and belonging to the Patentees of the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, London, being lost by his death, whosoever brings the said score, or a copy thereof, to Mr. Zackary Baggs, Treasurer to the said Theatre, shall have 20 guineas reward." This advertisement was repeated, but without result.

Among other things, Purcell wrote, in 1694, his great "Te Deum and Jubilate," in D, with orchestral accompaniments—the first example of such work our country had seen. This "Te Deum and Jubilate" was performed annually after 1697, until a similar piece was written by

Handel in 1713. These two were then performed alternately until 1743, when Handel having written the "Dettingen Te Deum," the latter composition superseded the two former.

Purcell wrote two anthems for the funeral of Queen Mary, one of which, "Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts," has been used at almost all the choral funerals in St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. Dr. Croft was so impressed with it that, when he set the Burial Office to music, he refrained from composing to these words, on the grounds that Purcell's music was unapproachable.

One of his latest compositions was the music to "Bonduca, or the British Heroine," in which are found "To Arms," and "Britons, Strike Home," and the last of all was a secular piece, a cantata entitled "From Rosie Bowers."

Apparently Purcell continued composing almost up to the end. We do not know very much about his last illness, which is believed to have been consumption, but we do know that he had been in failing health for some time. On the 21st November, 1695, the eve of St. Cecilia's day, he lay sick unto death. But although the illness that was upon him was mortal, his mind was clear and unclouded, as is evident from his will, made the day he died, and wherein he says:—"I, Henry Purcell, of the City of Westminster, gent., being dangerously ill as to the constitution of my body, but in good and perfect mind and memory (thanks be to God), doe by these presents, etc." We can almost see him lying on his couch or bed in his house, wasted with sickness, and being ministered to by a loving wife and an aged mother, his three infant children looking on with awe: probably thinking that in the Abbey not far off they were singing for his "passing" some pieces of his own setting. Then having said his "Nunc

dimittis" he would give up "his pure soul unto his Captain Christ," and the Child of Song would cease for ever to take part in earthly music and his spirit silently depart to the "land of shadows," to the "land of the hereafter," to join and become a part of the "choir invisible."

He was buried in the Abbey, beneath the organ on which he had so often and so skilfully played, and on a pillar close to where he lies is a tablet with this inscription:—"Here lies Henry Purcell, Esq., who left this life, and is gone to that blessed place where only his harmony can be exceeded. Obit 21 mo die Novembris, anno ætates suæ 37^{mo}. Annoq. Domini 1695."

In arriving at any estimate of Purcell and his place it is necessary to take into consideration the then condition of music, the times in which he lived, and the circumstances connected therewith. We ought to go even a little further back. Up to the time of the Reformation music, as we now understand the term, was, in our country at least, practically non-existent, many or nearly all, of the higher or more advanced forms being then totally unknown.

The secular kind had been mainly kept alive by the glee-men and minstrels, but the introduction of the art of printing, which made it possible to purchase ballads, coupled with the general rise in the standard of excellence, accelerated their downfall. What once had been enough at length became quite inadequate. Of the ecclesiastical music previous to that period we have but the most scanty remains. It was in the time of the second Tudor that Church music emerged out of semi-darkness and came into the open day. In the general upheaval that was taking place, it was impossible that music could be passed by and remain untouched. It was about that time, too, that the organ began to be anything like the instrument it now is. So we see that the divine art,

although, according to the poets, co-existent with the creation of man, was still in its infancy. Even Purcell speaks of it thus:—"Musick is but yet in its Nonage, a forward Child which gives hope of what it may be hereafter in England." The rough block was now ready to be operated upon, and Purcell was one of those whose early chisel has left indelible marks of beauty and strength upon the pure marble which he carved. True it is that he did not finish or complete the work for that is beyond the might of any one man, and it may be that it is not yet complete. We may be, like him, on the threshold of music, but Purcell, although he profited by the efforts of his predecessors, bent his genius to the work, with the result that however much he borrowed from those who had gone before, he left infinitely more for those who had to come after. Tallis, with Orlando Gibbons and others, but especially Tallis, largely founded, and contributed greatly to the repertory of English Church music, and no doubt their work was of great assistance to Purcell, inasmuch as their finishing point was his starting point. He would also be familiar with the best of the chamber music and madrigals written during the Augustan age of English art—the reign of great Elizabeth. The first brilliant period of music in this country, and especially of Church music, may be said to commence with Thomas Tallis, born in Henry VIII.'s reign, and end with Orlando Gibbons, who died in 1625.

It is very necessary too that notice should be taken of the circumstances of Purcell's time. He was born the year before the Protector died. Now, during the Rebellion, or fight for freedom, and during the Commonwealth, or Interregnum, music, as a whole, suffered a check. From the death of Elizabeth until the actual accession of Charles II., the standard of excellence in music declined. How

could it be otherwise? The musical giants of her reign left but few equals as successors: the political crisis in our country was approaching. During a portion of the reign of Charles I. musicians had difficulty in earning their bread. Those who generally assisted or took interest in such matters were either unable or unwilling to do so, owing to the complete overturning of social positions, life and intercourse. Music had to stand aside for a time when the country's freedom was at stake. Mistaken fanaticism also did much mischief. When one reads of the wanton destruction in the Cathedrals, where organs were smashed with pole-axes and the pipes pawned sometimes for pots of ale; where singing-books and anthems were burnt or torn to pieces, and scattered to the four winds of heaven; when musicians, organists, and singers were turned adrift, and compelled either to adopt some less congenial mode of earning their living, or starve, can one wonder that music suffered? It did suffer during that period, especially the earlier portion of it, but it was not totally eclipsed; the lamp was kept alight, notably at Oxford; and the musical instinct of the people, which had always been strong, particularly in the north, did not die.

Cromwell delighted in music, and it was owing to his intervention that the organ of Magdalen College,* Oxford, was saved from destruction and removed to Hampton Court, where, no doubt, he often heard it played by the hands of Milton, who, as we know, was keenly alive to the beauties of the art, and skilled as an organist.

But even Cromwell was for a time unable to stem the tide. In 1643 an Act was passed prohibiting any music being sung in churches, except plain metrical psalms, and

* It was afterwards taken back to its original place. Ultimately it was sold and re-erected in Tewkesbury Abbey, where some portions of it still remain.

these were to be sung without harmony, and unaccompanied by any instrument; and further, the words of every line were to be read out by the minister before they were sung. This latter restriction may possibly be the obscure origin of the old custom many of us are familiar with of reading one or two lines and then singing them, producing at times very ridiculous results. Nor was secular music much better off, for all the theatres and places of musical entertainment were forcibly closed, and no public performance of any sort of music permitted. At the Restoration, so great a dearth was there of singing-boys, that for the first two or three years the anthems composed were chiefly for men's voices only; in fact, practically, there were no singing boys. Matt. Locke says:—"For above a year after the opening of His Majestie's Chappel, the orderers of the musick there were necessitated to supply superior parts of the music with cornets and men's feigned voices, there being not one lad for all that time capable of singing his part readily."

As one might expect, the first efforts of the musicians to regain their position were made in a secular direction. A licence was granted in 1656 to Sir William Davenant for "an entertainment in declamation and music after the manner of the ancients." The building used for this purpose is generally looked upon as the first opera house in this country. Indeed we may fairly assume that if Cromwell's life had been prolonged he would have given emphatic assistance and support to music.

With the Restoration came the old order of things—old order true, but changed in almost every respect and not always for the better. Charles himself did not care much for the graver compositions of the old masters, he having been accustomed to the lighter and more melodious music of France (he liked music to which he could beat time), and

the taste of the people, or at least of those who were in a position to lead and direct that taste, called for something very different from the stately harmonies accepted as a standard by their forefathers.

We can now form some idea of the conditions that environed Purcell and his contemporaries. The lines on which English composers had hitherto worked had, by a natural process of evolution, become faint, and the limitations by which they had bound themselves, all too narrow. The old order had ceased to be adequate, and must give place to new. A man was wanted; a man appeared; his name—Purcell! He it was who took the helm and piloted the ship of Apollo through the different currents that were then influencing it; who freed the vessel from the parasitical growth that was hindering its progress onward to the open sea, and who so left it, that its course could be steered by the genius of the great captains who were to follow after him, to a haven fairer than he ever dreamt of. He did not remain a mere copyist of any one master or school, but without disregarding either the lightness of the French composers or the more solid Italian style he drew from the best of both, and wrote in a manner which astonished some of his critics by the freedom and boldness of his treatment. It is one of his glories that his genius burst the bonds that had hitherto “cribbed, cabined, and confined” the efforts of his predecessors. Like Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and others he broke through the rigid rules of his age, and by so doing extended widely the bounds of his beloved art. There was hardly any known form of musical art that he did not attempt, and in every case he rose to the level of, if he did not surpass, the highest standard of his time.

In the secular field, although he advanced music far beyond the condition in which he found it, his genius has

not retained that pre-eminent position to which it can lay claim through his ecclesiastical productions. In his church music may be found many pieces which occupy a prominent position even to-day, but so much as this cannot be said of his secular work. Yet, when his "Dido and Æneas" is compared with what had been done before, and when we consider the condition and supposed vocation of instrumental music in his early days, it may be fairly claimed that he had during his life no equal in this country—aye, or out of it. With regard to orchestration, he really had no models. He could not have had any more idea of the capacity of the orchestra as exhibited to-day by what some call the cacophony of Wagner, than he had of the telegraph or telephone.

Violin playing proper was only introduced into England about 1658. Anthony Wood says of Thomas Baltzar, who was performing at Oxford, that he "saw him run up his fingers to the end of the finger-board of the violin, and run them back insensibly, and all with great alacrity and *very good tune*, which he nor anyone in England saw the like before." Now, as Baltzar died in 1663, it is not likely that Purcell heard him play, and it is very possible that he never heard a capable violinist. True it is that Charles brought from France a band of violins (in which some have seen the foundation of our orchestra), but there is not the slightest reason to suppose that they would give any conception of the full power of the instrument. Compare the position, then, with that which obtains to-day, and conceive what Purcell might have done had he had an opportunity of hearing an orchestra like that of Hallé or Richter, and of studying the score! In his days there were no flutes as we now have them; clarionets, horns, and trombones were unknown. To judge Purcell fairly we must shut our eyes to the condition of things as they now are, and endeavour

to realise the circumstances of his time ; it would be absurd to do anything else. As Roger North quaintly has it—"put ourselves *in loco* of former states and judge *pro tunc*."

It is true Corelli was living and had written music for the violin, but it is nearly certain that Purcell neither heard nor saw any of it, and he certainly never saw the great Italian, although the latter expressed his admiration of the Englishman, and intended to visit him here. Unfortunately Purcell's early death prevented that meeting.

His style would, to-day, be pronounced too florid and too full of what were, in his day, called "graces." But he had, to some extent, to accept the prevailing taste, and although some allowance may be claimed on account of the fashion of his time (for there is a fashion even in music), it must be admitted that in some degree he did pander to the demands of his patrons, and wrote, at times, music which he knew would be acceptable. In palliation, I would urge what has often been pleaded for artists, namely, that "those who live to please, must please to live." But it may be claimed for him that he was about the first English composer who recognised the theory that the tone should be in agreement with the sense of the words, and that the latter should no longer be just a peg on which to hang any strain that happened to come into a composer's head. There is no doubt but that he has been excelled and improved upon by successive masters—that was inevitable—but his contrapuntal skill, to-day, claims the admiration of all musicians.

His modesty, as exhibited in some of his prefaces, is pleasing to notice, and although he seemed confident that his music was on correct lines, we do not find much trace of that insufferable conceit which sometimes is so disagreeable a feature in the character of artists ; for instance, such was a M. Grabu, who had been brought over from France

by Charles and made into a kind of musical king. On one occasion, under command, he composed an opera, and in his dedication to James, the inflated wind-bag says:—"As the subject of this opera is naturally magnificent, it could not but excite my genius, and raise it to a greater height in the composition—even so as to surpass itself. The only displeasure which remains with me is, that I could not possibly be furnished with variety of excellent voices to present it to your Majesty in full perfection." Compare the egotism of this coxcomb with the humility of Bach, who always headed his grand work with the words, "*Soli gloria Deo.*"

Sir John Hawkins is severe on Purcell as a tavern frequenter, and as one who prostrated his talents by writing music to wretched ribaldry. But consider the times! Hawkins suggests that Purcell left his family in distressed circumstances, which was untrue, and gives currency to a tradition that Purcell's death was occasioned by a cold caught through waiting for admittance to his own house, he having come home heated with wine at a later hour than Mrs. Purcell liked. He afterwards admits some doubt about the truth of this malignant story. But one can judge of the accuracy of the tale when we know that Hawkins' own daughter, writing, in 1822, about some aspersions thrown on her mother as to her treatment of her father, says:—"Sir John Hawkins was not at home at all the sooner for his wife's fetching him. Mrs. Purcell, I should conjecture, had other modes of attracting Mr. Purcell; yet *perhaps the whole may have been as gross a fabrication as that by which Lady Hawkins is vilified.*"

It appears to me that the truth about Purcell's health is, that his engagements at the Abbey, his compositions and his teaching, were more than his slender constitution could bear, in fact, that he was simply over-worked.

Handwritten musical score for 'Yoreshire Feast' by Henry Purcell. The score is written on ten staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written below the staves in a cursive hand. The lyrics are: 'chorus divine let musicke Joy in a chorus divine', 'let musicke Joy in a chorus divine', 'chorus let musicke Joy in a chorus divine', 'Joy in a chorus in a chorus divine', 'in a chorus a chorus divine'. The music features various note values, including minims, crotchets, and quavers, with some staves containing rests and repeat signs.

FAC-SIMILE OF AUTOGRAPH PAGE OF PURCELL'S "YORESHERE FEAST."
 (By permission of Mr. W. H. CUMMINGS.)

He wrote 150 sacred compositions, 28 odes, nearly 50 dramatic compilations, and a large number of other vocal and instrumental pieces. The facsimile of a leaf of his manuscript on the opposite page shows, in an interesting way, his method of working.

The name of Purcell as a musician is one in which we can take pride. His friends and those who knew him did not stint their admiration. One of them—Henry Hall, organist of Hereford Cathedral—writes :—

Hail ! and for ever hail, Harmonious shade !
I loved thee living and admire thee dead.

and a most glowing eulogium is embodied in the following extract from the second volume of "Orpheus Britannicus," 1702 :—

Make room, ye happy natures of the sky,
Room for a soul, all Love and Harmony ;
A Soul that rose to such Perfection here,
It scarce will be advanced by being there.

.

Pride was the sole aversion of his Eye,
Himself as Humble as his Art was High.

But even allowing for the adulation of the time, it is clear that he was held in great esteem by all who knew him, and we, in these latter days, advanced as we are in music far beyond the dreams of the composers of that period, can point to him as one whose artistic influence still lives—as one who did more than any other man of his time to raise and advance the standard of music in this country ; and all the more can we take pride in doing this, when we remember that he was one of ourselves—that he was an Englishman.





WALLER'S PLOT.

BY ARTHUR W. FOX.

LITERARY chivalry demands a rigid examination of any serious charge made against an eminent man of letters. That Edmund Waller won no inconsiderable reputation as a poet is as certain as that he inspired the heroic couplet of Dryden* and his school; that he was also a politician of less enviable notoriety is unfortunately equally indisputable. Born† on the 3rd of March, 1605, at Coleshill, which though actually in Hertfordshire belongs to the Buckinghamshire parish of Aymesham, he was the son of Robert Waller; his mother was aunt of Oliver Cromwell and sister of the patriot John Hampden; while Sir William Waller, the celebrated Parliamentary General, was also of the same stock. Thus, though a convinced Royalist, during the later troubles he had

* Dryden, in his dedication of the "Rival Ladies" to the Earl of Orrery says: "Rime has all the advantages of prose besides its own, but the excellence and dignity of it were never fully known till Mr. Waller taught it." In his dedication of his translation of the "Aeneid," "I say nothing of Sir John Denham, Mr. Waller, Mr. Cowley; 'tis the utmost of my ambition to be thought their equal or not much inferior to them."

† Life prefixed to the ninth edition of his "Poems" (1712), probably by Fenton. Cf. Chalmers' "Biographical Dictionary" and "Biographia Britannica."

friends on both sides, a very desirable possession in those anxious times. His father died when quite young, leaving him an estate worth £3,500 a year. By his mother's care he was educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge, where his youthful precocity and his ready wit at once procured him great renown. In 1625 he was chosen Member of Parliament for Chipping Wycombe, and in 1627 for Aymesham, both in Buckingham; and he aired his youthful eloquence in the House soon after his first appearance there, doubtless to the great and lasting edification of his elders. About this time he married Anne, daughter and heiress of Edward Banks, a wealthy London citizen, who died 1629-30. After his bereavement Waller retired to the fine house which he had built at Hall Barn, near Beaconsfield; and being, as his biographer hath it, "of a warm amorous complexion," he assailed with courtship and verse Lady Dorothea Sidney, the Sacharissa of his poems, but in vain.

Unable to obtain success in his love affairs he re-entered Parliament in 1640. Here he kept a cool head and a studied moderation, so that when the Civil War broke out he was on friendly terms with both parties. In Parliament he spoke "with great sharpness and freedom against the prevailing sense of the House;" yet he was chosen to impeach* Justice Crawley, who had declared in favour of the legality of the imposition of "Ship Money," at the same time he sent the King one thousand gold pieces when Charles raised his standard at Nottingham on August 22, 1642. In spite of his prevailing loyalty Waller denounced the step which precipitated the outbreak of the Civil War with much vehemence. Thus he obtained a reputation for impartiality, which drew to him such

* Waller's "Poems" as above, pp. 273-282, where the speech is given.

moderate men as his brother-in-law Tomkins, a very learned man and clerk of the Queen's Council, and Chaloner, an eminent London citizen. In short, in the year 1643 he was counsel-keeper of the moderate party, with whom he endeavoured to set on foot a plot to combine the forces of those who wished for peace and to force the Parliament to come to terms with the King.

The mystery which surrounds this plot is great, and the number of conflicting authorities only makes confusion worse confounded. The following narrative is the residuum left after boiling down the various opinions and evaporating the foetid fluid of party spite. Waller's object in his conspiracy was not in the first instance to resort to physical force. Dividing the City of London into districts, certain reliable men were appointed to ascertain the number of the moderate and well-affected in each. They were not, for the most part, told collectively what the object of their labour was to be, indeed never more than three at a time had any definite information at all given to them. Waller himself, Tomkins, and Chaloner held the clue of the mystery, and as the matter was one of great risk they kept its details very much to themselves. When the number of the moderate men was ascertained, the conspirators intended by combination with those outside the City to force the hand of the Parliament, and by swamping the opposition of the more violent party to compel the Commons to come to terms with the King.

Unfortunately for these milder conspirators a more truculent plotter arose in the person of Sir Nicholas Crispe,* a wealthy London citizen, who, by personal

* Lloyd's "Memoirs," pp. 627-8. May's "Parliament," Book III, chap. ii., pp. 234-5. Cf. Clarendon's "Great Rebellion," 3rd 1st Edition, Book vii., p. 197, *et seq.*

sacrifices and business skill, is said to have contributed to the King's necessities one hundred thousand pounds. Serving with the Court party at Oxford, he procured a Commission of Array, which he sent to London in a sealed box by the Lady D'Aubigny, whose husband had fallen at the battle of Edgehill. Though she suffered imprisonment for the carriage of so dangerous a document, she carried the box in perfect innocence of its questionable contents. By this Commission certain men to whom it was addressed were granted full powers to summon a Council of War for London, Westminster, Middlesex, and Southwark. It must be noted that the names of Waller, Tomkins, and Chaloner do not appear in this document, a fact of some importance to the present investigation. Any four of the persons named were to choose colleagues to the number of twenty-one and no more, and were further empowered to appoint a General with subordinate officers, who might, if necessary, execute martial law. Furthermore, they were permitted to raise money for arms, clothing, ammunition, and any other necessities; while they enjoyed full power "To lead* the soldiers, and by bloodshed, if need be, to bring the King." The chief objects of this conspiracy may be reduced to four heads. "(1), to seize the King's children; (2), to seize upon several Members of both Houses of Parliament, upon the Lord Mayor of London, and the Committee of the Militia there under pretence of bringing them to legal trial; (3), to seize upon all the City's outworks and forts, upon the Tower of London, and all the magazines, gates, and other places of importance in the City; (4), to let in the King's forces, to surprise the City with their assistance; and to destroy all those who should by the authority of Parliament be their opposers; and to use

*Rushworth's "Collections Abridged," Vol. V., p. 112.

force of arms to resist all payments imposed by authority of both Houses for support of those armies employed in their defence."*

That Waller and Tomkins knew of this further plot is certain, if our evidence, of which there is superabundance, is to be trusted. The Commission of Array was found in Tomkins' cellar; and Bulstrode Whitelock† says of Waller, "That he did come one evening to Selden's study, where Pierpoint and Whitelock then were with Selden, on purpose to impart it to them all, and speaking of such a thing in general terms, those gentlemen did so inveigh against any such thing, as treachery and baseness, and that which might be the occasion of the shedding of much blood; that (he said) he durst not for the awe and respect which he had for Selden and the rest communicate any of the particulars to them, but was almost disheartened himself to proceed in it." This remark could not fitly apply to so peaceful a plan as Waller's own device, which could hardly have resulted in bloodshed; but must refer to the larger conspiracy of Sir Nicholas Crispe. However that may be, the two plots were wedded into an unholy alliance, and in the excited imagination of the times became one. For this result Waller's cowardice was largely reponsible, for he confessed crimes of which he knew, but which he had never intended to commit. In any case the plot was betrayed to John Pym,‡ but by whom is uncertain; Rushworth says the traitor was one Roe, an eaves-dropping servant of Tomkins; while the author of the *Life of Waller*, who may be Fenton, quoting from what he calls a manuscript of undoubted authority,

* *Ibidem*, Vol. V., p. 113.

† "Memoirs," &c., p. 70.

‡ Rushworth's "Collections," Vol. V., p. 111. Clarendon's "Great Rebellion," 1st Edition, book vii., p. 190. Waller's "Poems (9th Edition) and Life," p. 22.

asserts that Waller's "Sister Price, and her Presbyterian Chaplain, Mr. Good," were the culprits. Perhaps both stories are true, and in the published accounts of the trial of the poet and his confederates the former was put forward as the less odious of the two.

The plot was discovered* on May 31, 1643, which happened to be one of the Wednesday Fast-Days, when the House of Commons went in a body to church, to have their spirits fired with resistance to the King, and their hearts humiliated by the woes of the kingdom. They were† "at their sermon" in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, when the betrayal to Pym took place; whereupon, assuming a more important look even than usual, as well he might, he moved out of the church and sent guards to all the prisons and necessary places of alarm. Terror reigned in the hearts of those left behind in the church, which soon spread through the City, whose sons in the main sympathised with the Parliament; and Waller, Tomkins, Chaloner, and many others were at once arrested. The last two were executed; but Waller was able to protract the date of his trial by real, or, as seems most probable, feigned sickness. In actual or pretended remorse he "sought‡ the ghostly counsel of the most powerful ministers of all factions," and "received vulgar and vile sayings with humility and reverence, as clearer convictions and informations than in his life he had ever had." By using the interest of these reverend gentlemen he escaped the horrors of a military trial, and that too at a time when the feelings of those concerned were highly excited; while by dint of betraying all his associates he

* May's "History of the Parliament," &c., Book III, chap. ii., pp. 285-6.

* Clarendon's "Great Rebellion," 1st Edition, book vii., pp. 195-6.

† *Ibidem*, 4th Edition, book vii., pp. 200-1.

came off with loss of honour, a fine of ten thousand pounds, and banishment. Such in the main is the outline of Waller's plot, and such Waller's cowardice upon its discovery, as far as can be discerned from the mists of conflicting testimony.

Clarendon, who had no reason to love Waller, who, at a later period, both spoke and voted for his impeachment, believes the story of the plot to have been much magnified, and entirely acquits Waller of any intention of letting the King's forces into London. Whether he is right or not, the House of Commons was so filled with terror that its members took a solemn* vow not to lay down arms, and to maintain the Protestant religion; while a great parade of danger was made in order that the position of the Parliament might be strengthened in the eyes of the citizens of London. The varying accounts of the plot by Rushworth, May, and Whitelock, no doubt represent with fair accuracy Pym's statement in the House of Commons. Whether that be accurate or not is quite another question, which cannot easily be decided at this distance of time. But that there were two plots is certain; that Sir Nicholas Crispe's plot commended itself to Lord Conway is probable, and that Waller's plot was not a very dangerous matter appears likely. That these were blended into one and unduly magnified, such reliable evidence as remains seems to show. Whatever conclusions we may reach as to the plot itself, and whether Waller was a conspirator in both plots or not, our authorities are unanimous in their opinion of the poet's conduct. His eloquence saved his life at the expense of a treachery which caused the death of his brother-in-law, Tomkins. His confession seems to show that he was at least acquainted with both the

* *Ibidem*, pp. 198-9.

conspiracies, even if he did not actually know the details of that of Sir Nicholas Crispe, and his evidence did much to convict men who otherwise might have escaped. Had he been prosecutor instead of King's evidence this would have been just and right; but a terrified traitor betraying the secrets of his friends does not show to advantage in the eyes of true men. His wit might save his life, but it could not preserve his honour untainted; and he had to spend many years abroad with a smarting conscience, a tarnished reputation and a diminished purse. "Yet," says Clarendon, "he lived after this in good affection, and the esteem of many, the pity of most, and the reproach and scorn of few or none."* If a contemporary, who had little love for the poet, could judge him so charitably, though we cannot admire, we can pity his cowardice, and admit with Colonel Newcome that "a poor devil can't command courage any more than he can make himself six feet high." Indeed Bishop Hurd's† summing up of Waller's character appears to be in the main true: "He resembled the famous Marquis of Winchester, Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer, who served four princes in changeable times and successfully to himself, because, he said, *Ortus sum e salice non e quercu*." The old man fell asleep on October 21, 1687; and his "Last Verses in the Book" may fairly be quoted here to show that after a stormy summer of life a settled calm had sunk upon the winter of his age.

When we for age could neither read nor write
 The subject made us able to indite;
 The soul with nobler resolutions deckt,
 The body stooping does herself erect;
 No mortal parts are requisite to raise
 Her, that unbodied can her Maker praise.

* "Great Rebellion," Vol. II., Book vii., p. 201.

† "Moral and Political Dialogues," I.

The seas are quiet, when the winds give o'er ;
So calm are we, when passions are no more ;
For then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost.
Clouds of affections from our younger eyes
Conceal that emptiness which age descries.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made,
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home,
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

Miratur limen Olympi—Virgil.





CHARLES WOLFE, B.A., POET AND PASTOR.

BY WILLIAM DINSMORE.

Rich he was in holy thought and work ;
And thereto a right learned man ; a clerk
That Christ's pure gospel would sincerely preach,
And his parishioners devoutly teach.

Chaucer.

THIS amiable clergyman was distinguished for his sincere and modest piety, eagerness for knowledge, and poetical gift. He laboured—to use saintly George Herbert's words—"to make the name of a priest honourable by consecrating all his learning and all his abilities to advance the glory of God." Very little is known to the world of the career of this faithful servant of God and humanity.

Alas! in the morning and ardour of youth he fell a victim to excessive zeal in the discharge of the duties of his sacred calling. Yet he dignified his little day of life with pious thoughts and deeds of goodness.

It is not growing like a tree,
In bulk, doth make man better be.
A lily of the day
Is fairer far in May ;
Although it fall and die that night,
It was the flower and plant of light.

Charles Wolfe was born in Dublin on the 14th December, 1791. He was the youngest son of Theobald Wolfe, of Blackhall, County Kildare. His mother was the daughter of the Rev. Peter Lombard. When Charles was a child his father died, and consequently the boy spent his tender years in his loving and prudent mother's care. She removed her family to England, and Charles, at the age of ten, was sent to school in Bath; but owing to ill health he had to return home. In 1802 he attended Dr. Evans' school in Salisbury; from thence he went to Mr. Richards' boarding school at Winchester.

There he soon distinguished himself by his proficiency in classical learning and his success in versification of Greek and Latin. His amiable disposition and eminent ability were fully appreciated by his teachers and school-mates: they termed him the "pride of Winchester School." During his stay in Winchester he gave evidence of poetic ability, which his friends and relatives fondly hoped would eventually place him among the poets who adorn British literature. He enjoyed his sojourn in the famous old city of Winchester, which contained such ample material to rouse, expand, and refine his poetic faculty. There his fancy could rise, fresh as a lovely morning in Spring, and soar to lofty heights unwearied in her flight. He mused on famous battlefields, where heroes fought in olden days. His imagination drank at fabulous fountains, and he pondered on traditions of King Arthur and his companions. He rambled among the grey ruins of the ancient stronghold wherein the Saxon kings held their court, and he roamed by rivers and streamlets, through lovely vales and over charming plains of this delightful land, the most pleasant district of its kind in the United Kingdom. When he desired to refresh his soul and muse on spiritual things he repaired to the

famous cathedral of Winchester, and joined in the service of praise and thanksgiving:—

While the majestic organ rolled
Contrition from its mouths of gold.

Very grand and wonderful is this great prayer house of Winchester; such splendid columns, arches, windows, and chantries! The magnificent altar-screen is one of the most beautiful in England. Very fine, too, is the tomb of William of Wykeham, who almost rebuilt this far-famed church. Yet not alone the great master Wykeham, for other skilled workers assisted in raising or renovating this cathedral. These architects and craftsmen built their hearts into their work; their lives were builded into the walls of this great church, which represents every style of Gothic art. Nevertheless a life of purity and love dedicated to the honour of God and the service of humanity is a nobler thing than this renowned church. In the year 1808 Widow Wolfe removed her family to Ireland, and she took her beloved son Charles along with her, as she could not leave her favourite child among strangers. In his eighteenth year he entered the University of Dublin, where he soon became a general favourite among his fellow-students, and a special favourite of his tutor, the Rev. Dr. Davenport. Wolfe quickly distinguished himself by his superior classical attainments, thereby gaining many college honours. His first English composition in verse obtained the approval of the poet's tutors and friends. The subject of the poem—Jugurtha's reflections in prison—was proposed by the principals of the University. Wolfe's rendering of the subject displays vigorous expression, boldness of fancy, and dramatic force. Towards the close of his first year at college his mother died. This irreparable loss was keenly felt by her affectionate son Charles. A relative who knew him intimately

said: "His company was her first earthly comfort, she used to count the hours when the time drew near for his return to her; and in nearly twelve years that he was under her care he never acted contrary to her wishes or caused her a moment's pain."

When a boy he wished to join the army, but in deference to his mother's desire he gave up all thoughts of a military career, yet he ever retained an interest in the pomp and circumstance of war. His patriotic pride in British valour finds expression in his vigorous lines "The battle of Busaco." He had a personal interest in the art of war. He was related to General Wolfe, the gallant, jovial hero and lover of music and poesy,* who was killed at the storming of Quebec, on the 13th of September, 1759.

When the days of mourning for the loss of his mother had passed, Charles Wolfe resumed his studentship at Dublin University. His college career was distinguished by zeal and application to his studies, but when he was appointed tutor, he was so prodigal of his time and attention to his pupils, that he almost neglected his own studies and healthy exercises.

This ardour in promoting the welfare of others was a characteristic trait in his nature. He obtained a scholarship with the highest honour, and became a resident in college. He also gained medals for oratory and for compositions in prose and verse. After the summer recess he was appointed to the honourable position of opening the session of the Historical Society, by a speech from the chair. The most distinguished orators of the society aspired to this honour. Wolfe's address was received with

* The night before the conflict, as General Wolfe and his comrades cautiously sailed across the River St. Lawrence, Wolfe, in low tones, repeated several stanzas of Gray's "Elegy." He gave peculiar emphasis to the line, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave," and he declared he would rather have written the famous "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" than take Quebec.

great applause, and a gold medal was awarded to him. Only fragments of this address have been preserved. I quote a portion of it, which appeals to my sympathy. Wolfe, in this oration, spoke of the consolation afforded by the Muse and literature to those in affliction, and he referred to the comfort conferred by the Muse on Milton in his days of blindness and penury, as follows:—

“ There lived a *divine old man*, whose everlasting remains we have all admired, whose memory is the pride of England and of Nature. His youth was distinguished by a happier lot than, perhaps, genius has often enjoyed at the commencement of its career. He was enabled, by the liberality of fortune, to dedicate his soul to the cultivation of those classical accomplishments in which almost his infancy delighted; he had attracted admiration at the period when it is most exquisitely felt; he stood forth the literary and political champion of republican England—and Europe acknowledged him the conqueror. But the storm arose: his fortune sank with the republic which he had defended; the name, succeeding ages have consecrated, was forgotten; and neglect was embittered by remembered celebrity. Age was advancing—health was retreating—Nature hid her face from him for ever, for never more returned—

Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks or herds, or human face divine.

What was the refuge of the deserted veteran from penury—from neglect—from infamy—from darkness; not in a querulous and peevish despondency; not in an unmanly recantation of principles . . . he turned from a distracted country and a voluptuous Court—he turned from triumphant enemies and inefficient friends—he turned from a world that to him was a universal blank,

to the Muse that sits among the cherubim—and she caught him into heaven! The clouds that obscured his vision upon earth instantaneously vanished before the blaze of celestial effulgence, and his eyes opened at once upon all the glories of the Almighty. . . . What, though to look upon the face of the earth was still denied—what was it to him that creation was concealed from his view—when the Deity permitted the Muse to unlock His mysteries, and disclose to the poet the recesses of the universe—when she bade his soul expand into its immensity and enjoy its magnificence—what was it to him that he had fallen ‘upon evil days and evil tongues,’ for the Muse could transplant his spirit into the bowers of Eden, where the frown of fortune was disregarded, and the weight of incumbent infirmity forgotten in the smile that beamed on primeval innocence, and the tear that was consecrated to man’s first disobedience.”

Another touching instance of the compensation of literature is furnished in the life of Archbishop Usher, when in his old age no spectacles could aid his weak eyesight, and the pages of his favourite books were blank, except when a bright ray of sunshine lighted upon them. When the sun shone brightly, the aged servant of God patiently waited until the sunbeams entered his study and fell on the pages of his cherished volume. Then, with uplifted heart, he read his book and followed the sunshine from room to room through his abode, until the light thickened and the stars peeped out, and the moon appeared and shed her placid beams on the venerable Archbishop’s face, suffused with joy while he murmured his heartfelt thanks for the privilege he again enjoyed in reading and pondering on choice and noble themes of literature and communing with the immortal mind of man enshrined in books.

While Wolfe was pursuing his successful career at college, he had a love disappointment, which checked the ardour of his exertions for the further attainment of university honours, and partly eclipsed the gaiety of his nature. In consequence of the frustration of his heart's desire, his dream of Fame vanished, but his dreams of love hovered around his pure heart always.

Perhaps he chased his heart-ache away in lilting some of the merry melodies of his native land, or lightened the burden of his sorrow by singing George Wither's beautiful song, "Shall I, wasting in despair, die because a woman's fair?" It does not appear that his experience of the bitterness of disappointed love had any influence in deciding the choice of his calling, as the tendency of his mind had always been toward the office of pastor. He was ordained in November, 1817, and appointed to the temporary curacy of Ballyclog, County Tyrone, North of Ireland.

After a brief stay in Ballyclog, he was presented to the charge of Castle Caulfield, Tyrone, a large and scattered parish situated in a wild, bleak, hilly country; bogs and trackless wastes abound, and the people are so scattered that it is difficult for a clergyman to keep up intercourse with them. There, he said, he was again the weather-beaten curate; he trudged vile roads, forded bogs, braved snow and rain, became umpire between the living, counselled the sick, and administered to the dying.

In his devoted labour among his flock and his neighbours, he had none to aid him, and at home he was without the soul-sustaining and comforting help of "the nearer one and the dearer one than all other." His house was very comfortless, damp, and wholly unfitted for any one with a tendency to consumption. His church, too, was damp, depressing, and mean-looking. But his soul's light illumed that humble building, and made it resplendent

as he prepared the souls of his flock for a brighter and better abode on high.

In the following extract from a letter to a friend a good knowledge is obtained of his duties as a clergyman :—

“ Castle Caulfield, Oct. 20, 1818.

“ MY DEAR ———

“ My life is now nearly made up of visits to my parishioners, both sick and in health. Notwithstanding, the parish is so large that I have yet to form an acquaintance with a very formidable number of them. The parish and I have become very good friends: the congregation has increased, and the Presbyterians sometimes pay me a visit.

“ There is a great number of Methodists in the part of the parish surrounding the village, who are many of them very worthy people, and among the most regular attendants of my church. With many of my flock I live upon affectionate terms. There is a fair proportion of religious men amongst them, with a due allowance of profligates. None of them rise so high as the class of gentlemen, but there is a good number of a very respectable description. I am particularly attentive to the school: there, in fact, I think most good can be done; and, besides the obvious advantages, it is a means of conciliating all sects of Christians by taking an interest in the welfare of their children.

“ Our Sunday school is very large, and is attended by Roman Catholics and Presbyterians: the day is never a Sabbath to me; however, it is the kind of labour that is best repaid, for you always find some progress is made, some fruit produced; whereas your labours with the old and the adult often fail of producing any effect, and, at the best, it is generally latent and gradual.”

Wolfe's pastorship in Castle Caulfield was full of noble effort for the welfare of his flock and the wellbeing of others. He led a saintly life, he spared not himself, he laboured with heart and brain from dawn till night, and in the noon of night; he responded to every demand for his aid and advice. He scarcely found time to be alone with his thoughts; he bade a long farewell to literature and all its pleasures and associations. His frank and genial deportment, his sympathy for the poor—many of them sunk in the Hades of poverty—his deep interest in the education and training of children, his moral courage, manly simplicity, tolerance, and charity, combined with absolute devotion to his sacred calling and firm conviction in a sound form of moral and religious life, prove how deep are the sources of true religious belief and action in the human heart.

Shortly after Wolfe's appointment to Castle Caulfield parish large congregations were attracted to his church. These worshippers were drawn to him by the magnetism of his nature and his unselfish endeavours to increase human happiness, devout manner of rendering the liturgy, and impressive style of extemporaneous preaching.

This mode of discourse—so unusual in Wolfe's time among the clerics of the Church established by law—delighted his Presbyterian and Methodist neighbours, who flocked to hear him. Some of these dissenters, up to the advent of Wolfe to the cure of Castle Caulfield, looked on the Church of England as a kind of political machine; but when they listened to Parson Wolfe's earnest and devout manner of rendering the Church service they confessed that there was something higher aimed at than political conversion. Many of these dissenters became Wolfe's fast friends, and frequently sent for him to administer spiritual comfort to them in times of ill health

and at the hour of death. A worthy Presbyterian dame, referring to Wolfe's earnest mode of preaching, said :—
“ Ma certe, Meenister Wolfe is no sae Heelint ; I like his roosin' style ; I hope he's soun' on election ; I'm ane o' the elect masel', sae I am a' richt. Meenister Wolfe is maist guid eneuch tae be a preacher in the Kirk o' Scotlan'.”

Wolfe's presence among the people of Castle Caulfield filled their hearts with new hope and delight. By his lovable nature and consistent life he raised the moral tone of those who came within his influence. He was beloved and worshipped by his parishioners, who were drawn to him by his precepts and example and a desire to aid all who suffer, all who, living, tread upon this earth of graves, longing for peace, for slumber, and for final rest. His creed was the religion of charity and love, abounding in happiness, and without fear.

Wolfe's indefatigable activity in visiting the sick of his parish afflicted with typhus fever, which raged over the Province of Ulster in the year 1820, entailed on him a great amount of extra labour and anxiety. In the discharge of these duties in winter time he contracted colds which confirmed a tendency to consumption, symptoms of which appeared in his college days. In the spring of 1821 “fell consumption's fatal dart” buried itself deeply in his constitution, yet he continued, with great zeal and courage, to perform the duties of his ghostly office until he became like a ghost in appearance. For a long time friendly counsels could not prevail on him to give up parochial work.

In May, 1821, he yielded to the entreaties of his friends and consulted a physician in Edinburgh, famed for his skill in treating consumptive cases. During his stay in Edinburgh, although he was afflicted with an habitual cough, he delivered a characteristic address before a meeting of the Tract Society

When he returned to his parish, his flock received him with demonstrations of joy and affection. As he passed through Castle Caulfield many of the villagers knelt and invoked blessings upon him, and some followed him a long way, making the most anxious inquiries about his health. The eminent Edinburgh physician counselled Wolfe to retire from his parish work, therefore he returned to Dublin, where he preached occasionally, although his malady increased. His solicitude about the welfare of his parishioners interfered with everything which might assist in his recovery to health, and when he was obliged to tender the resignation of his pastorate his malady seemed to increase, and his frame became more emaciated.

In the autumn of 1821 he was advised to winter in Bordeaux, but in attempting to land there the vessel he sailed in was twice driven back by violent storms, which caused him so much suffering that he prudently abandoned the plan of residing during that winter in France. He settled in Exeter, where he remained for several months without any benefit to his health. In August, 1822, he was again advised to sojourn in Bordeaux, where he arrived after a perilous voyage. During his stay in France he enjoyed a slight relief from suffering, for which he was grateful to Providence.

In order to guard against the severity of winter, he removed to the Cove of Cork—Queenstown—which is sheltered on every side from harsh winds. Here he revived a little, but any unfavourable change of weather shattered his rapidly decaying strength and caused him to cough incessantly. He bore his final sufferings with meekness and resignation. During his illness his discourse was full of wise observations and tender regard for his attendants. His courage remained steadfast even when the physician, on the day before his departure into the

silent land, said to him :—"Your mind, sir, seems to be so raised above this world that I need not fear to communicate to you my candid opinion of your state." Wolfe, with admirable composure, replied :—"Yes, sir, I trust I have been learning to live above the world." He then conversed on his own hopes impressively and effectively, and having learned that his remarks had a favourable effect on the mind of his medical attendant, he entered more fully into the subject with him on the next opportunity, and conversed for an hour in such a tender and solemn manner that the physician retired to an adjoining chamber to weep, saying :—"There is something superhuman about that man : it is astonishing to see such a mind in a body so wasted ; such mental vigour in a poor frame dropping into the grave."

On the morning of the 21st of February, 1823, Charles Wolfe expired, in the 32nd year of his age, displaying more than ordinary courage, composure, and resignation up to the last moment of his life.

Wolfe's poetical talent appears to have been little appreciated by himself. His innate modesty and the fastidious judgment he exercised on his own verse caused him to underrate what his judicious friends and competent critics approved. Many of the manuscripts of his poems and prose compositions were not carefully preserved by him nor kept in proper order, consequently nearly all his best verse is lost. He sang of love and friendship, piped rousing strains in praise of British prowess, and tuned his lyre in praise of nature and patriotism.

In his poem, entitled "Patriotism," he avers that the love of one's country is an abiding passion, of Divine origin, and that in Paradise there are patriotic spirits who are ever interested in the welfare of their native land ; he says, or sings—

Are there not patriots in the heaven of heavens ?
 And hath not every seraph some dear spot—
 Throughout th' expanse of worlds some favourite home
 On which he fixes with domestic fondness ?
 Doth not e'en Michael on his seat of fire,
 Close to the footstool of the throne of God,
 Rest on his harp awhile, and from the face
 And burning glories of the Deity,
 Loosen his riveted and raptured gaze,
 To bend one bright, one transient, downward glance,
 One patriot look, upon his native star ?
 Or do I err !—and is your bliss complete,
 Without one spot to claim your warmer smile,
 And e'en an angel's partiality ?
 And is that passion, which we deem divine,
 Which makes the timid brave, the brave resistless,
 Makes men seem heroes,—heroes demigods—
 A poor, mere mortal feeling !—No ! 'tis false !
 The Deity Himself proves it divine,
 For when the Deity conversed with men,
 He was Himself a Patriot !

Wolfe's fame rests chiefly on his well-known poem, "The Burial of Sir John Moore," which has obtained a permanent place in English literature for the pathos and sublimity by which it is distinguished. Lord Byron said this composition is one of the most perfect odes in our language.

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE.

Air—"Open the door gently."

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
 As his corse to the rampart we hurried ;
 Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
 O'er the grave where our hero we buried !

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
 The soda with our bayonets turning,
 By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
 And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him ;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow ;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollow'd his narrow bed,
And smooth'd down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow !

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on,
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done,
When the clock struck the hour for retiring,
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory ;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.

The Rev. John A. Russell, M.A., Wolfe's intimate friend and biographer, says that " 'The Burial of Sir John Moore' found its way to the press without the concurrence or knowledge of the author. It was recited by a friend in presence of a gentleman travelling towards the North of Ireland, who was so much struck with it that he requested and obtained a copy; and immediately after it appeared in the *Newry Telegraph*, with the initials of the author's name. From the *Newry Telegraph* the poem was copied into most of the London prints, and thence into the Dublin papers; and subsequently it appeared, with considerable errors, in the 'Edinburgh Annual Register,' which contained the narrative that first kindled the poet's feelings on the subject and supplied the material to his mind.'

W. H. Malcolm, Holywood, Co. Down, in a recent communication anent the early publication of Wolfe's ode says, "It was in the *Newry Commercial Telegraph* that the lines first appeared. Dr. Stuart, the then editor of the *Newry Telegraph*, said that he found the MS. in the street."

The poem remained for a long time unclaimed, and it became the prey of literary spoliators, who were detected and exposed. In "Chambers' Cyclopædia" it is recorded that "in 1841 it was claimed by a Scottish student and teacher who, ungenerously and dishonestly, sought to pluck the laurel from the grave of its owner. The friends of Wolfe came forward and established his right beyond any further question or controversy; and the new claimant was forced to confess his imposture, at the same time expressing his contrition for his misconduct."

Charles Wolfe's emotional nature delighted in music; simple melodies charmed him; sacred music—especially the compositions of Handel—powerfully affected his feelings. His martial ardour was aroused when he heard the Spanish air, "Viva el Rey Fernando"; he sang the melody over and over again until he produced a song in English, happily suited to the transitions which occur in the tune.

THE CHAINS OF SPAIN ARE BREAKING.

Air—"Viva el Rey Fernando."

The chains of Spain are breaking !
 Let Gaul despair, and fly ;
 Her wrathful trumpet's speaking,
 Let tyrants hear, and die.

Her standard, o'er us arching,
 Is waving red and far ;
 The soul of Spain is marching,
 In thunders to the war.

Look round your lovely Spain,
 And say shall Gaul remain !—
 Behold yon burning valley ;
 Behold yon naked plain ;
 Let us hear their drum—
 Let them come, let them come !
 For vengeance and freedom rally,
 And Spaniards ! onward for Spain.

Remember ! remember Barossa ;
 Remember Napoleon's chain ;
 Remember your own Sarragossa,
 And strike for the cause of Spain ;
 Remember your own Sarragossa,
 And onward ! onward ! for Spain.

He had an inborn love for the melodies of his native land, and he has left words to the very popular melody, Gramachree, which alone will keep his memory alive. His verse is happily wedded to the genius of the old air.

During the composition of this song he was moved to tears, and many a one since his day has felt the pathos of this lyric, mayhap with fond recollections of a beloved one and happy hours, when to love was exquisite bliss and the world went so gaily.

SONG.

Air—"Gramachree."

If I had thought thou couldst have died,
 I might not weep for thee ;
 But I forgot when by thy side,
 That thou could'st mortal be :
 It never through my mind had past,
 The time would e'er be o'er,
 And I on thee should look my last,
 And thou shouldst smile no more !

II.

And still upon that face I look,
 And think 'twill smile again ;
 And still the thought I will not brook,
 That I must look in vain !

But when I speak—thou dost not say,
 What thou ne'er left'st unsaid ;
 And now I feel, as well I may,
 Sweet Mary ! thou art dead !

III.

If thou would'st stay, e'en as thou art,
 All cold, and all serene—
 I still might press thy silent heart,
 And where thy smiles have been !
 While e'en thy chill, bleak corse I have
 Thou seemest still mine own ;
 But there I lay thee in thy grave—
 And I am now alone !

IV.

I do not think, where'er thou art,
 Thou hast forgotten me ;
 And I, perhaps, may soothe this heart,
 In thinking too of thee :
 Yet there was round thee such a dawn
 Of light ne'er seen before,
 As fancy never could have drawn,
 And never can restore !

The words of the following song were written by Wolfe at the request of a lady musician for a melody she composed, and which, I understand, was never published. I have selected a characteristic unhackneyed Irish melody for Wolfe's verses.

SONG.

Air—"O leave me to my sorrow."

I.

Go, forget me—why should sorrow
 O'er that brow a shadow fling !
 Go, forget me—and to-morrow
 Brightly smile and sweetly sing.
 Smile—though I shall not be near thee ;
 Sing—though I shall never hear thee :
 May thy soul with pleasure shine
 Lasting as the gloom of mine !

II.

Like the sun, thy presence glowing,
 Clothes the meanest things in light ;
 And when thou, like him, art going,
 Loveliest objects fade in night.
 All things look'd so bright about thee,
 That they nothing seem without thee ;
 By that pure and lucid mind
 Earthly things were too refined.

II.

Go, thou vision sweetly gleaming,
 Softly on my soul that fell ;
 Go, for me no longer beaming—
 Hope and beauty ! fare ye well !
 Go, and all that once delighted
 Take, and leave me all benighted ;
 Glory's burning—generous swell,
 Fancy and the Poet's shell.

One of Wolfe's most amiable traits was his firm attachment to his friends in whose company he found solace and enjoyment. These chosen ones valued him for his social qualities, purity of mind and womanly tenderness of heart. Often when seated by his lonely fireside in Castle Caulfield parsonage, in the hour when companions meet, he sighed for the company of his beloved ones, and he preferred the recollection of those he left in Dublin to all the society County Tyrone could furnish—with one bright exception. Time spent in making true friends, or in their company, is never lost. The following verses from Wolfe's poem "To a Friend" may serve to indicate the poet's friendly disposition :—

TO A FRIEND.

Air—"The Young May Moon."

I,

My own friend—my own friend !
 There's no one like my own friend ;
 For all the gold
 The world can hold,
 I would not give my own friend.

II.

So bold and frank his bearing, boy,
Should you meet him onward faring, boy,
 In Lapland's snow,
 Or Chili's glow,
You'd say what news from Erin, boy?

III.

He has a curious mind, boy—
'Tis jovial—'tis refined, boy—
 'Tis richly fraught
 With random thought,
And feelings true and kind, boy.

IV.

'Twas eaten up with care, boy,
For circle, line, and square, boy—
 And few believed
 That genius thrived
Upon such droway fare, boy.

V.

But his heart that beat so strong, boy,
Forbade her slumber long, boy—
 So she shook her wing,
 And with a spring
Away she bore along, boy.

VI.

She wavers unconfined, boy,
All wayward on the wind, boy.
 Yet her song
 All along
Was of those she left behind, boy.

VII.

And we may let him roam, boy,
For years and years to come, boy ;
 In storms and seas—
 In mirth and ease
He'll ne'er forget his home, boy.

VIII.

O give him not to wear, boy,
Your rings of braided hair, boy—
 Without this fuss,
 He'll think of us,
His heart—he has us there, boy.

The sensations evoked by the charms of nature also found expression in the fervour of Wolfe's utterance. The following poem on Lough Bray, is a specimen of the poet's descriptive style. The lake referred to in his verse is situated near the top of a high mountain in the midst of a romantic and beautiful region in the northern portion of County Wicklow.

FAREWELL TO LOUGH BRAY.

Then fare thee well !—I leave thy rocks and glens,
 And all thy wild and random majesty,
 To plunge amid the world's deformities,
 And see how hideously mankind deface
 What God hath given them good : while viewing thee,
 I think how grand and beautiful is God,
 When man has not intruded on his works
 But left His bright creation unimpair'd.
 'Twas therefore I approach'd thee with an awe
 Delightful,—therefore eyed, with joy intense—
 With joy I could not speak (for on this heart
 Has beauteous Nature seldom smiled, and scarce
 A casual wind has blown the veil aside,
 And shown me her immortal lineaments).
 'Twas therefore did my heart expand, to mark
 Thy pensive uniformity of gloom,
 The deep and holy darkness of thy wave,
 And that stern rocky form, whose aspect stood
 Athwart us, and confronted us at once,
 Seeming to vindicate the worship due,
 And yet reclined in proud recumbency,
 As if secure the homage would be paid :
 It look'd the genius of the place, and seem'd,
 To superstition's eye, to exercise
 Some sacred unknown function.—Blessed scenes !
 Fraught with primeval grandeur ! or if aught
 Is changed in thee, it is no mortal touch
 That sharpen'd thy rough brow, or fringed thy skirts
 With coarse luxuriance : Then I watch'd
 The clouds that coursed along the sky, to which
 A trembling splendour o'er the waters moved
 Responsive ; while at times it stole to land,
 And smiled among the mountain's dusky locks.

Surely there linger beings in this place,
For whom all this is done :—it cannot be
That all this fair profusion is bestowed
For such wild wayward pilgrims as ourselves.
Haply some glorious spirits here await
The opening of heaven's portals ; who disport
Along the bosom of the lucid lake ;
Who cluster on that peak ; or playful peep
Into yon eagle's nest ; then sit them down
And talk of those they left on earth, and those
Whom they shall meet in heaven ; and, haply tired
(If blessed spirits tire in such employ),
The slumbering phantoms lay them down to rest
Upon the bosom of the dewy breeze.—
Ah ! whither do I roam—I dare not think—
Alas ! I must leave thee ; for I go
To mix with narrow minds and hollow hearts.
I must depart—fare thee, fare thee well !





SONNET.

BY W. R. CREDLAND.

(In imitation of A. W., an anonymous Elizabethan poet.)

IN Summer Season on a sunshine day
I joy to lie in some bird-haunted place,
And dream fair dreams wherein my Lady's face
A sweet love-game of hide-and-peep doth play
'Mid flowers and leaves and nodding bracken spray;
While on my heart Love's busy fingers trace
A Golden Legend of her every grace
So glowingly that there 'twill burn away.
And when the glory fades along the west,
And all the music of the grove is still,
And I do rouse me from my mossy rest—
A large content the hushed world seems to fill,
And my glad heart with glamour lights the way,
For in Love's sunshine I have basked a day.



